

Latinos in American Society

*Families and Communities
in Transition*

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I dedicate this book to past and contemporary academics and practitioners who have provided incisive and powerful scholarship to make visible the impact of social inequality on the lives of historically underrepresented Latino subgroups. Su trabajo initiated an emerging oppositional discourse in mainstream social science research. I also dedicate this book to Latino families and communities, who continue to strive, thrive, resist, overcome, and triumph in spite of exclusionary practices. Their victories offer daily inspiration.

I

Introduction

Why Study Latino Families?

Hispanics need to become an integral part of the movement to uncover the complex forces intensifying inequality, poverty, political passivity, exploitation, and social isolation, not only within their own ranks but in the United States as a whole

—Camarillo and Bonilla 2001, 131

All social scientists must be prepared to explain, when asked, why their chosen area of inquiry merits attention and research. When it comes to the study of Latino families in the United States, this “So what?” question looms large because Latinos are the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the United States, and yet as a group they remain virtually invisible in the national political agenda as citizens in the United States.¹ At the same time, the reality

1. For the purpose of this book, and consistent with the federal standards for racial and ethnic data, I use the terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* interchangeably. Though often used interchangeably in American English, *Hispanic* and *Latino* are not identical terms, and in certain contexts the choice between them can be significant. This book uses the terms interchangeably, especially by staying true to direct quotes and/or data in which *Hispanic* is almost always used in the collection of empirical data. *Hispanic*, from the Latin word for “Spain,” has the broader reference, potentially encompassing all Spanish-speaking peoples in both hemispheres and emphasizing the common denominator of language among communities that sometimes have little else in common. *Latino* is a political construct that challenges hegemonic notions of a singular European Spanish ancestry. (Rangel 1977, 3–5; Skidmore and Smith 2005, 1–10). Of the two, only *Hispanic* can be used in referring to Spain and its history and culture; a native of Spain residing in the United States is a *Hispanic*, not a *Latino*. Yet one cannot substitute *Latino* in the phrase “the *Hispanic* influence on native Mexican cultures” without garbling the meaning (see the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed., 2006). In the United States, survey after survey of Latinos have found that their preferred form of identification is through their specific national origin; that is, as Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Hondurans, and the like (De la Garza et al. 1992; Rodriguez 2000). The basis of Latino/Hispanic identification as “others” in U.S. society is through a nationalism and/or ethnicity grounded in their country of origin, whether born there or not. This creates the constant potential for transnational identities fed by very active international circular migrations, supporting such broad and (to many) obscure notions as cultural

is that Latino families are seriously affected by federal and state policy because they are deeply embedded in the structures of inequality and subordination.

Undertaking the study of families within this ethnic group presents special challenges for a few reasons. First and foremost, data collection in all states and the District of Columbia did not occur for Latinos until 1997, and we still face many difficulties interpreting the data due to limited analyses by subgroup, gender, and socioeconomic status (Rodriguez 2000; Zambrana and Carter-Pokras 2001). In addition, research on Latinos has traditionally suffered from an inherently Eurocentric perspective that has resulted in fundamental misunderstandings of how Latino families are structured and operate from within. Moreover, researchers have often ignored the powerful impact of historical and structural factors that shape the lives of the Latino community. One must also account for the factors that contribute to a distinct heterogeneity of Latino family processes. These factors include differences associated with national origin, socioeconomic status in country of birth, racial phenotype, educational attainment of family of origin, and the access to or denial of social capital due to parental education attainment. Among U.S. born and immigrant Latino populations one must also consider historical modes of incorporation and discriminatory immigration policies and practices, which contribute to a very different life experience. For these groups, family formation, intergenerational differences, and options and opportunities available to members of Latino families differ by socioeconomic status, nativity and subgroup (Hernandez 2009; Lansford et al. 2007; Telles and Ortiz 2008).

Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans constitute the majority of the Latino population. Emerging Latino subgroups from the 1960s to the present include Cubans (1960s) and Central Americans and South Americans, who have steadily increased in numbers since the 1970s (Dorrington et al. 1989; Gonzalez 2000; Organista 2007). The influx of Spanish-speaking ethnic subgroups over the last three decades has yielded a number of interesting debates regarding differences and similarities among the groups. In the intellectual and political discourse, I have seen attempts to broaden the empirical lens to better explain how Latinos fit within the existing social structure and class hierarchy of the United States, but until recently little attention has been devoted to examining the sociopolitical and structural factors that keep poverty, racial discrimination, and limited opportunity firmly in place among Latino groups (Almaguer 1994; Oboler 2006; Telles and Ortiz 2008). Because the

citizenship (Flores and Benmayor 1997; Oboler 2006) and other postcolonialist perspectives (Soja 1996). Last, an effort to use nonsexist language has included the use of *Latina/o* to acknowledge both female and male groups. *Latina* usually refers to feminine, while *Latino* is usually a masculine form. For the sake of simplicity, *Latino* will be used throughout when referring to the total population and is inclusive of both male and female.

data are not commonly situated in the political context of resource allocation (as it affects employment and educational opportunities, for instance), the reasons for disparities in educational, income, and employment opportunities and their relationship to family processes and well-being remain misunderstood and misrepresented.

Fortunately, we have seen a growing body of scholarly research in recent years that has begun to fill the void in our understanding of the lives and daily experiences of the Latino population. This research is emerging predominantly from interdisciplinary fields such as Chicano studies, U.S. Latino studies, family studies, and women's studies. Taken as a whole these scholarly orientations are enabling us to see the true heterogeneity that exists within and across subgroups of Latinos by citizenship, mode of historical incorporation, and socioeconomic status. The purpose of this book is to synthesize this growing body of scholarship conducted on Latinos by national origin, age, gender, and socioeconomic status or position (SES or SEP)² (education and income), focusing specifically on how these factors have shaped family processes and family well-being. I analyze the multicausal factors that contribute to the disproportionate burden of low educational attainment, high residential segregation, and high morbidity and mortality among Latinos through the life course. I also examine how these factors come together and result in economic disadvantage while contributing to the widespread perception of Latinos as poor and unsuccessful.

An important feature of the book is the nuanced approach it takes to the relationship between ethnicity and culture. Cultures transform as ethnic groups are shaped by factors including immigrant status on arrival, length of time in the United States, increased education and dominant perceptions and ideology of the racial and ethnic group by the host culture. Culture is also interpreted and informed by racial phenotype and educational and economic resources. In assessing the study of Latino families, the unmeasured factors or the assumptions inherent in interpreting cultural behaviors require interrogation. Thus culture is only one of the multiple dimensions that shape family outcomes, and

2. I use socioeconomic position (SEP) and socioeconomic status (SES) interchangeably throughout this book. Socioeconomic position (SEP) is a commonly used concept and is usually measured by completed years of schooling. Galobardes et al. (2006) state, "Although researchers have an intuitive sense of what SEP means, the numerous ways of measurement indicate the complexity of the construct. 'Socioeconomic position' refers to the social and economic factors that influence what positions individuals or groups hold within the structure of a society and encompasses concepts with different historical and disciplinary origins. A variety of other terms, such as social class, social stratification, social or socioeconomic status (SES), are often used interchangeably despite their different theoretical bases and, therefore, interpretations." These issues have been discussed in detail by Krieger et al. 1997. See also Galobardes et al. 2006; Lynch and Kaplan 2000; Liberatos et al. 1988; Williams 1990; Williams and Collins 1995.

it is important to consider its influence in the context of historical, economic, political, structural, and representational factors.

Intersectional Lens: Theoretical Assumptions

Any study of minority groups in the United States must consider multiple dimensions of inequality. Focusing solely on race/ethnicity, class, gender, or nationality (nation of origin) is insufficient. It must also explore relations of domination and subordination in the structural arrangements that determine the distribution of resources and the availability of services. For this reason, I have adopted in this book an intersectional approach to examine the experiences of Latino families, women, children, and youth. As an analytic tool, intersectionality has proved to be extremely useful for studying the experiences of minority groups because it acknowledges the many dimensions of inequality and seeks to understand how they are interrelated and how they shape and influence one another. It also requires us to think in complex and nuanced ways about identity and challenges us to look at the points of cohesion and fracture *within* ethnic groups as well as those *between* ethnic groups and the dominant group culture (Dill and Zambrana 2009).

Intersectionality has a set of foundational claims and organizing principles for understanding social inequality and particularly the social location of subordinate groups. Drawing on Critical Race Theory (CRT),³ it begins with the basic premise that race is a social construction and that racism is widespread, systematic, and institutionalized. Moreover, traditional laws and values are seen as “vessels of racial subordination.” Therefore, the lived experiences of racial/ethnic groups can be understood only in the context of institutionalized patterns of unequal control over the distribution of a society’s valued goods and resources (such as land, property, money, employment, education, health care, and housing).

An intersectional approach challenges traditional modes of knowledge production in the United States by taking into account the full range of historical and social experiences of individuals within minority groups with respect to class, gender, sexuality, and race. For example, the generalized social problem of Latino girls having high pregnancy rates belies differences by SES and intra-group and intergroup differences. Since most data are collected on individuals of Mexican origin and most studies are conducted in low-income Mexican-origin communities, Latino girls as a whole become maligned as socially irresponsible.

3. Critical Race Theory (CRT) draws from critical legal studies, feminist or gender studies, the American civil rights tradition, and nationalist movements that began in 1989. CRT can be considered a progressive movement in the law and legal education that seeks to secure the rights of people of color. For a history and discussion of this legal theory, see Bell 1980; Crenshaw 2002; Delgado and Stefancic 2001. Its basic theoretical organizing tenets have been infused into intersectional theory, Latina/Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit), and Asian Pacific American critical race theory.

The intersectional lens contextualizes the experiences of low-income, young Mexican-origin girls within a community context where schooling resources limit their options; for example, by not providing sex education and restricting access to such opportunities as after-school academic programs.

An intersectional approach also recognizes the role played by economic and social positioning of groups within society along with racialized institutional practices that are strongly linked with family and child well-being. For example, the location of educational and health services with respect to low-income Latino communities determines access to quality education and health care and is a major factor affecting the well-being of Latino women, children, and families. An intersectional approach takes into account the distribution of public educational and health resources in terms of historical patterns and political considerations, which in turn makes it possible to see that the concentration of wealth and public resources in middle- and upper-income communities and the prioritization of public policies such as tax cuts and college-level financial aid are more likely to benefit those communities.

Intersectional analysis, therefore, enables us to see the direct impact of the unequal distribution of society’s goods and resources on the development of low-income Latino communities. Examining the interaction of poverty with race/ethnicity and gender demonstrates that these factors, taken together, have a disproportionately negative effect on Latino women (Latinas) and result in detrimental health consequences. Low-income Mexican American and Puerto Rican women, historically underserved groups, experience poorer physical and mental health status, suffer with undetected medical conditions longer, are less likely to have health insurance coverage, and have less access to preventive and curative services than the majority population (Aquirre-Molina et al. 2003; National Research Council, 2002; see chap. 7). Structural inequities are important dimensions when examining questions of social and economic justice, both to reveal the sources of the social and economic inequality among Latino groups and to identify ways to redress them (see, e.g., Cammarota 2007).

Race, ethnicity, class, and community context matter; they are all determinants of access to *social capital*—that is, resources that improve educational, economic, and social position in society. For instance, one measure of social capital within a community is the quality of its neighborhood schools (do they have strong libraries, computer resources, and advance placement courses?), which has a direct bearing on entry into higher education and future economic and employment opportunities. Studies have found that when Latinos are concentrated in segregated or hypersegregated communities, their access to such resources declines dramatically relative to other communities (Acevedo-Garcia 2000; Kumashiro 2008; Noguera 2003).

In addition to structural, political, historical, and locational factors, intersectional analysis emphasizes the importance of representation—the ways social

groups and individuals are viewed and depicted in the society at large and the expectations associated with these depictions (Chin and Humikowskie 2002; Davila 2001; Zambrana et al. 1987). Stereotypes that all Latinos are immigrants, do not speak English, have too many children, and have come to the United States to get government handouts affect the discriminatory way in which public policies are designed and implemented to decrease their access to public resources (Silliman et al. 2004, 216). We have seen the effects of this dynamic in the early twenty-first century with the resurgence of xenophobia directed especially at Mexican immigrants, and this is despite the fact that diversity and color-blindness are heralded as markers of a democratic society.

The role that non-English-language proficiency plays in the formation of a negative portrayal of Latinos and not for other language minority groups is worthy of exploration for it can tell us much about a host society's receptivity, perceptions, and the integration of immigrant groups into the host society. For example, English-language proficiency and citizenship status data reveal that 70 percent of Latinos speak English "well" to "very well" and that only 39 percent of Latinos are immigrants, with about half of those residing in the country for more than ten years (see chapter 2). Understanding the origins of these portrayals, as well as the multiple and simultaneous factors that contribute to negative perceptions of Latinos as a group, is a vital step toward reducing inequality.

Individual and group identity are complex—influenced and shaped not simply by race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and identity, physical dis/abilities, or national origin but by the confluence of all of those characteristics. Nevertheless, in a hierarchically organized society, some statuses become more important than others at any given historical moment and in specific geographic locations. Within groups there is far greater diversity than appears when, for analytic purposes (e.g., censuses), people are classified with a single term. For instance, the meaning of the term *Latina*—as a gendered, ethnic, and racial construct—varies depending on the social context in which it is employed and the political meanings associated with its usage. The term *Latino/Latina* emerged as a direct counterpoint to the term *Hispanic*. It challenged the privileging of Spanish or Hispano lineage over the other indigenous and African lineages of Spanish-speaking individuals in the United States. The renaming was important in that it drew attention to the roots of Latino/a ethnic/cultural identity, raising awareness of the multiple lineages and histories of Spanish-speaking people in the United States, particularly historically underrepresented groups and more recent Caribbean immigrants. As Lourdes Echazabal-Martinez (1998, 21) has noted, "Mestizaje, the process of interracial and/or intercultural mixing, is a foundational theme in the Americas, particularly those areas colonized by the Spanish and Portuguese. Mestizaje underscored the affirmation of cultural identity as constituted by national character."

In the United States Latinos have historically been classified as White, although they resist simple racial categorization (Rodriguez 2000). Since the 1980s Latinos have been provided the opportunity to identify both ethnic and racial categories in census reporting, but this has not solved the problem.⁴ In the 2000 Census 48 percent of Latinos described themselves as White, 2 percent as Blacks, 6 percent as mixed, and 42 percent as "other." The resistance to racial categorization obscures the fact that Latinos have been classified as White but historically perceived as people of color and thus they have been economically and socially marginalized. The situation faced by certain Latino groups is even more complicated. Caribbean immigrants and migrants confront a two-tiered division of racialized identity in the United States between Whites and non-Whites derived from the rule of *hypodescent*—the assignment of the offspring of mixed races to the subordinate group. According to Jorge Duany (1998), "Caribbean societies tend to be stratified in terms of both class status and color gradations. Phenotype and social status rather than biological descent define a person's racial identity, especially in the Spanish-speaking countries" (148). Therefore the reconstruction of one's racial and social status and cultural identity by the host society can generate significant social and psychological tensions within and across these groups.

All of this points to the fact that the term *Latino* needs to be further examined and discussed because its underlying political discourse is not largely understood. Homogenizing all Latinos/as into one category forecloses the discourse on national identity and overlooks the effects of the intersection of gender, race, ethnic subgroup, and SES on Latino social location. Identity for foreign-born Latinos is complicated by differences in national origin, citizenship status, and class (in both the sending and host countries), as well as race and ethnicity. In other words, it is important to look beyond how the public discourse represents negative differences in certain ethnic groups, such as Mexican-origin people, and understand why this group gets the most attention in the social science literature and the media. An intersectional approach forces

4. The 2010 questionnaire lists fifteen racial categories, as well as places to write in specific races not listed on the form. The 2010 Census continues the option first introduced in the 2000 Census for respondents to choose more than one race. Since the 1970 Census, the questionnaire has asked U.S. residents whether they are of Hispanic origin and, if so, which broad Hispanic group they identify with. Hispanic origin is considered separately from race in the Census—and Hispanics may identify with any race. In this book, *White* may be used interchangeably with *non-Hispanic White* (NHW) who self report within these two categories. *Black* will be used to refer to individuals who self-report as *non-Hispanic Black* (NHB) or African American or Negro and specific designations such as Black Caribbean are used when appropriate as part of original research. For further information on racial and ethnic categories, see U.S. Census Bureau, *The 2010 Census Questionnaire: Informational Copy* (January 2009), http://2010.census.gov/2010census/pdf/2010_Questionnaire_Info_Copy.pdf.

us to acknowledge these differences, which in turn enables us to examine and understand these differences.

Any discussion of Latino groups in the United States must confront the issue of naming and categorization: Hispanic or Latino? The very question often draws an impassioned response, which in turn can lead to unproductive debates over how Hispanics/Latinos got here in the first place. The historical incorporation of Latinos into the American society has been one of granting citizenship but not granting equal access to citizenship rights (Obler 2006). The struggles of Mexican American people in the United States are well documented, albeit not necessarily taught with great depth or profundity in our educational system. The history of Puerto Ricans as a conquered colonial people is even less spoken about, even though it is well documented. Citizenship for U.S.-born Latinos, namely Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, has not provided equal protection under the law (for example see Johnson 1995). In effect citizenship rights have been implemented as an earned privilege rather than a right. Using the term *Latino* as a political category impedes the accurate measurement of structural and political factors such as institutional racism, and the data serve only a limited purpose in advancing knowledge on family processes and gender within and across Latino subgroups.

In summary, an intersectional lens is a critical, interdisciplinary tool used by social scientists to interrogate racial, ethnic, and gender disparities and to contest the ways those disparities are often explained as linear rather than multifaceted. Equally important, an intersectional lens envisions knowledge production as a tool to improve the lives of the people we study and to unveil those structures that require change and remediation. This information can inform advocacy efforts and public policy; for example, in school systems. Furthermore, the production of knowledge cannot occur in a vacuum. A central tenet of intersectionality is the comparative approach both within and across U.S. racial and ethnic groups as a way of providing a fuller understanding of the nature of dominance, subordination, and inequality (Dill and Zambrana 2009, 2). For example, new survey data from different sources permit intragroup comparison of Latinos by national origin and foreign-born versus U.S.-born that helps to disrupt the generalized notion that all Latinos fit the stereotype of poor, non-English-speaking aliens. Using an intersectional lens we can identify these differences and dispel stereotypes so as to produce knowledge and promote public policy solutions to decrease inequality in American society.

Organization of the Book

My goal in this book is to explore the multiple intersecting social factors that influence Latino family processes and social location. To do this I survey and synthesize the wealth of work on Latinos by subgroup, citizenship status,

gender, and developmental life course within the last two decades. In the process, I bring multiple disciplinary voices into conversation with each other and systematically examine the research as part of a larger set of issues that include racialization, inequality versus inequity, and neutrality versus bias. I include examples of studies from the major social science disciplines including sociology, psychology, media and communication, and education as well as interdisciplinary fields including women's studies, racial/ethnic studies, public health, family studies, and social work. Analyses of major thematic approaches to Latino ethnicity employing systematic techniques are used to assess use of definitions and characteristics of Latino population under study, methods used, results and interpretation of data, and gaps in information and implications.

Chapter 2 presents the basic demographic data, showing that Latinos are a diverse and growing population. I integrate and elaborate on the major demographic social, educational, and occupational indicators by national origin to illustrate the disadvantage incurred by Latino subgroups as a result of the intersection of race, ethnicity, and national origin. I present the sociodemographic data by national origin, gender, geographic distribution, citizenship status, and language use, including trend data when available. I describe specific immigration patterns by country of origin as well as information in states of Latino concentration. Projections are included as Latinos represent the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the United States, and, when available, data are comparative with non-Hispanic Black (NHB), non-Hispanic White (NHW), Asian, and by Latino subgroup. Ultimately, chapter 2 reveals, through data, that Latinos are not a homogeneous racial and ethnic group. For example, significant differences exist in levels of socioeconomic status; namely, educational achievement by national origin. As a group, those individuals who self-report as Latino constitute a mixture of European, indigenous, American Indian, and African backgrounds. Despite the growth in and the diversity of this significant minority group, Latinos are socially, economically, and educationally underrepresented in all major levels of the U.S. infrastructure. I also argue that there are racial and ethnic distinctions in the perception of Latino subgroups and these distinctions shape the material conditions of their lives. These data serve to contest the representativeness of empirical works that have ignored key historical, demographic, and socioeconomic indicators while claiming to advance our knowledge of Latino subgroups in the United States.

Chapter 3 synthesizes the major paradigms used in the social sciences including examples of family studies to understand variation in patterns of family structure and functioning. I describe selected empirical studies conducted in the multiple domains of family processes, such as parent-child communication, mothering and parenting, and gender-role socialization in Latino families. I focus on the themes and the context used or omitted to explore knowledge production on the dynamics of Latino family processes in the United States.

The studies are critically reviewed to assess their contributions to furthering our knowledge of Latino family processes by subgroup and the multiple factors that are associated with particular family patterns in the United States. The scholarship and voices of Latino critical legal theorists, gender theorists, and racial and ethnic theorists are also included to assess different perspectives on the factors associated with the material conditions and social location of Latino families in American society.

Little has been written about the heterogeneity of Latino families by socioeconomic status (SES), subgroup, family structure, and gender role attitudes and behaviors. I review the research to determine if there are themes and differences that distinguish Latino family processes from non-Latino families by SES and to identify similarities with non-Latino families. I critique culturally driven models and seek to disrupt conventional, traditional models that produce knowledge on essentialized Latino families. My intent is to deconstruct culture as a negative Latino identity marker and reframe culture as an ethnic asset that contributes to the group strengths but does not contribute to the production of inequality. I propose an intersectional model in the study of Latino families and communities that can provide different ways of thinking and theorizing on the multiple social locations of Latina/os and explore ways to more profoundly understand why negative perceptions of Latinos in the American public imagination persist.

Chapter 4 presents data on the impact of parental involvement, SES, and school structure on Latino educational achievement. A significant amount of work has been conducted in the field of education and much of it has excluded historical, social, and economic factors in their analyses. I challenge existing frameworks that continue to perceive parents and culture as the primary reasons for educational failure often excluding factors such as institutional racism and low SES that hinder active parental participation in a child's education. Studies that examine the role of parents in education are reviewed as well as factors that contribute to the engagement or disengagement of students in the educational pipeline from prekindergarten through twelfth grade. The experiences of boys and girls reveal different outcomes particularly in the areas of education, health, and juvenile and criminal justice. Therefore, chapters 5 and 6 are dedicated to examining the lived experiences of Latino girls and boys.

Chapter 5 focuses on Latina adolescents from a developmental life course perspective with analyses of gender roles, schooling, and motherhood at an early age. Specific demographic and educational profiles are included, and comparisons are made with other racial and ethnic girls and Latino boys. Examples of studies on school leaving, gender role performance, motherhood, and gender identity are examined using an intersectional perspective. New emerging scholarship expands the understanding of the factors such as neighborhood context that shape the material conditions and life options of predominantly

low-income Mexican American girls and women. Not unexpectedly barriers to upward mobility are shaped by the lived experiences and material conditions of adolescence, and barriers to the opportunity structure in their youth limit women's strategies for success and enhanced life options.

Chapter 6 discusses males from a developmental life course perspective. Significant research has been conducted in the last ten years on behavioral risk factors among young adolescent males. I review studies on changing gender roles, schooling, employment, fathering, family roles and relationships, and the social construction of masculinity. I interrogate the traditional cultural scripts that have framed the study of Latino boys and men, predominantly Mexican American, absent of the context of SEP, negative representations, and marginalization of Latino males. Emerging scholarship is presented that contextualizes the lives and life options of Latino males within the context of a racialized and inequitable opportunity structure.

Chapter 7 provides an overview of physical and mental well-being indicators among Latino children, adolescents, women, and men. A critique of the Hispanic epidemiologic paradox is proffered based on new data by Latino subgroup, gender, and SES. Extensive health data has been generated that masks differences by Latino subgroups or reports only on Mexican-origin groups. Health data like other empirical areas of inquiry are embedded in a culturally driven framework of acculturation. Powerful critiques have surfaced regarding the scientific rigor of health findings, since most studies generalize findings of low-income Mexican—immigrant samples to *all* Latinos. Factors associated with health conditions and the potential impact on family health are discussed. I draw conclusions from consensual findings on social and economic determinants of health that move beyond culture-driven explanations.

Chapter 8 examines public systems as sites of the reproduction of inequality. The major argument is that public systems act as gatekeepers rather than safety nets for historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups. Data are presented on poverty rates by race and ethnicity and access to and use of public benefits intended to enhance opportunity for economic self-sufficiency. Findings show that public systems experience a continuous lack of resources to help vulnerable populations who need it most. These systems differentially allocate resources based on race and ethnicity—and are not designed to provide the skills and resources needed to escape poverty. Persistent documentation of discriminatory patterns within public systems, such as child welfare, public assistance, education, housing, health, and juvenile justice and correctional systems that privilege Whites over Blacks and Latinos exists. I argue that poor, racialized groups are more likely to interface with multiple public service systems through the life course. Social science research that omits measures of neighborhood conditions and institutional practices, such as zero tolerance policies in schools, produce distorted information on Latinos as a “culturally deviant” group.

Chapter 9 provides an overview of the media and social science representations and their role in maintaining and promoting the discourse on Latino identity as a homogeneous, foreign group. Brief analyses of the images and representations of Latinos in mainstream channels of communication in the United States illuminate the underlying dynamic that has persisted in dismissing the contributions of U.S. Latinos, presenting negative images, and a persistent cultural production of Latinos as an inferior, singular ethnic entity. Interrogating these stereotypic representations challenges the essentializing of U.S. Latino groups in terms of intergenerational differences in values and behaviors, wealth and rates of home ownership, diasporic movements, and voting participation rates. These trends refute the discourse on Latinos as a static, unacculturated citizen group.

The last chapter, "Capturing the Lives of Latinos in the United States: Advancing the Production of Critical Social Science Knowledge" summarizes major findings and draws on existing work to propose a set of theorizing conclusions for future use in studies on Latinos. I also present areas of intellectual gaps that require more research. Research precautions are proffered for better inclusion of critical factors that differentially affect family processes and the dynamic changes in normative family patterns and gender role performance that are taking place. I also encourage the conduct of both intergenerational family research and within group research by SEP and type of family structure to extend the boundaries of knowledge production.

In summary, the predominant conceptual model embraced for understanding Latinos (U.S.-born or recent immigrant) has been a culturally driven explanatory framework that more often than not omits differences by nation, history, SES, ethnicity, and race. I aim to interrogate the narrow frameworks that have yielded the hyperculturalization of the Latino experience in the United States in order to propose a more comprehensive and critical perspective for the study of predominantly U.S.-born Latinos.⁵

The mutually constituted identity markers of race, SES, gender, and nativity, associated with structural inequality matter in the lived experiences of Latinos, and these assumptions must be explicit and not ignored. Notably,

5. Immigration studies are prolific in the study of immigrants as a homogeneous category and the study of the impact of Mexican immigration on the social order in the United States. The current obsession with Mexican immigration is not a new phenomenon but reflects the cyclical xenophobia in the United States regarding the influx of Mexican nationals and the racialized and targeted policies against this Latino subgroup. In this book, I include foreign-born Latino data in comparison to native-born groups to assess differences and similarities and to identify racialized and discriminatory institutional practices; however, I do not address processes of adaptation. For additional information on immigrants and Mexican immigration, see Chavez 2001, 2008; Eckstein 2009; Foner 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, 2003; Suro 1998; Portes 2000, 2007; Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

I cover a selected body of work as research on U.S. Latinos and immigrant Latinos has proliferated in the last two decades. The included works drawing predominantly from the social sciences illustrate how a narrow lens can produce knowledge that can be interpreted as a particular ethnic group or culture having inherent deficits. Yet I recognize that scientific conventional models represent the thinking of the dominant culture within the scientific community. These models have served to shape research, and thus determine who is published in mainstream science and who is not. In effect the critique is of the research, including my own, and the goal is to challenge the conventionality of these research approaches to promote a different way of thinking that captures the multilevel set of historical and social factors that are associated with Latino social location, family processes, gender roles, and community context.

2

Demographic Trends

Past, Present, and Future

Latinos are constructing their vision of society, claiming their rights and entitlements based on their daily cultural practices and in the process, recreating America.

—Flores and Benmayor 1997, xi

Latinos currently number 41.3 million people, or 15 percent of the total U.S. population, and are the largest racial/ethnic group in the country. The Hispanic population of the United States is projected to grow to 132.8 million by July 1, 2050, and will constitute 30 percent of the nation's population. Latinos may be of any race and have diversity even within their own ethnic identity and heritage.

Despite their growing numbers and influence within American society, Latinos have not received extensive national attention until recently, most notably during the 2008 presidential campaign. Historical accounts and descriptions of Latinos abound in the literature and in government reports as well as in social science research.¹ Yet few high schools, colleges, or universities have stand-alone courses devoted to Latinos nor do they typically include Latinos as a comparative group to understand demographic trends. Thus in many ways Latinos as a national, heterogeneous demographic, and predominantly citizen group are not a visible part of the American public imagination. In this chapter, therefore, I review the data on Latinos, drawing attention to the sociodemographic indicators by national origin and gender, geographic distribution, immigration patterns and status, nativity (foreign-born vs. U.S.-born), citizenship status, and language use.² As much as is possible I describe specific immigration patterns by

country of origin as well as state information by Latino concentration. Data are comparative with non-Hispanic Black (NHB), non-Hispanic White (NHW), and Asian³ and by Latino subgroup when available to ensure insertion of Latino groups as part of the American social and political landscape.

"Hispanics," as Latinos are most commonly known, are foundational to the fabric of American society. They were not an officially recognized population until 1976 as a result of the passage of Public Law 94-311 and the federal standards for the collection of racial and ethnic data by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Directive No. 15 in 1978⁴ (del Pinal 1996; Zambrana and Carter-Pokras 2001). In 1980 Hispanics were officially counted for the first time not as an aggregate White category but as a distinct racial/ethnic group. The push to disaggregate the data by Hispanic subgroups was led by Latino leaders who believed that specific information on each subgroup could provide some legitimacy for claims to public resources and new avenues of economic opportunity. They argued that the development of a political voice by historically underrepresented groups, especially Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, who had similar patterns of experiences based on their racial and ethnic ancestry, was important since limited representation of their concerns at the national level kept them largely invisible. Moreover, they saw it as important to reaffirm these groups as separate American racial/ethnic citizen groups distinct

studies conducted by researchers, and studies conducted by nonprofit organizations such as the Pew Hispanic Center. These studies may represent different cohorts and different years and may not be consistent. Other limitations of data sources: Data may still be reported only for Latino/Hispanics as an aggregate, and other studies may report data only for Latino immigrants without indicating country of origin.

3. An excellent source on demographic information for Asians can be found at U.S. Census Bureau 2007. The American Community Survey (ACS) estimated the number of Asians to be 13.5 million, or 4.7 percent of the U.S. household population. The number of individuals who reported Asian as their only race was 12.1 million, or 4.2 percent of the population. About another 1.4 million reported their race as Asian and one or more other races, including 882,000 people who reported their race as Asian and White. The Asian-alone-or-in combination population included 328,000 Hispanics, and the Asian-alone population included 142,000 Hispanics. People who reported one or more Asian groups on the ACS question on race, such as Asian Indian or Japanese are included as Asians. Among Asians, Chinese (excluding those of Taiwanese origin) were the largest group in the United States, with a population of 2.8 million, or 23 percent of the Asian-alone population. Asian Indians were the second-largest group, with a population of 2.2 million, or 19 percent of the Asian-alone population. Filipinos were the third-largest group, with a population of 2.1 million, or 18 percent of the population. These three groups—Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos—accounted for about 60 percent of the Asian population. Other sizable populations included 1.3 million Vietnamese and 1.3 million Koreans. More than two-thirds of Asians were U.S. citizens, either through birth (about 33 percent) or naturalization (about 37 percent).

4. See *Joint resolution relating to the publication of economic and social statistics for Americans of Spanish origin or descent*, Public law 94-311, 94th Cong. (June 16, 1976); Office of Management and Budget, Directive 15: Race and Ethnic standards for federal statistics and administrative reporting, in *Statistical Policy Handbook* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1978).

1. For recent government reports and empirical social science research, see Tienda and Mitchell 2006; Organista 2007; Gonzalez 2000.

2. A cautionary note regarding data sources and potential data inconsistencies: Many sources are used to present data, including U.S. Census Bureau data conducted by the federal government,

from European and Anglo Americans to underscore their historical treatment and yet invisible contributions to U.S. society.

As of 2000 the terms *Latino* and *Hispanic* have been used together or interchangeably in many data-collection forms to refer to persons who lived in, became part of through conquest, or came to the United States from regions and countries that share a cultural heritage with the Spanish conquerors.⁵ The term *Hispanic* was devised by the Census Bureau to identify "a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race." The definition has major flaws. One is that Mexican-origin peoples were in North America prior to its founding by Europeans and its naming as the United States of America. Second, the emphasis on Spanish culture erases the influences of indigenous, African, and other European cultures in defining the current "Latino culture" in the United States. Thus preference for a particular identity label, *Hispanic* or *Latino*, reflects a political and social consciousness of the meaning and implications of each term. Identity as *Latino* or *Hispanic* is left to the individual to self-report and therefore it can change with generations, historical moments in time, and political identity. Some argue that the term *Latino* has become a negative identity marker that contributes to the social location and persistent negative perceptions of Latinos in the United States.

Contemporary Latino communities are a complex mix of native-born and immigrant families. The specific social and cultural influences found in a particular community reflect the dominant historical settlement patterns of the area as well as more recent demographic shifts by geographic region. For example, the Southwest is home to a predominantly Mexican-origin population that is dominated by people of mixed Indian and Spanish heritage. Many of these communities predate the earliest European settlements in the eastern United States. The New York/New Jersey area is home to people who migrated to the Eastern seaboard from the Caribbean basin more than a century ago (around the same time as the great Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigration from Europe), including people who came from the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico. As Edna Acosta-Belén and Carlos Santiago (1998) noted, a *colonia hispana* of intellectuals was a vital

part of Latino life in New York and other major U.S. cities as early as the late nineteenth century. Their work more generally has uncovered many of the important contributions that Latinos have made to American history, offering invaluable "glimpses into the everyday life of the diverse Latino communities at different historical periods" (34).

The long and varied history of Latino groups in American society has been well documented by historians and social scientists. There are accounts of conquest, subjugation, and marginalization as well as accounts of the long and continuing struggle for incorporation (see, e.g., Almaguer 1994; Acuña 2007; Barrera 1979). Kurt Organista (2007) provides an in-depth historical account of Latino citizens and the more recent waves of Latino immigrants, and work such as that by Victoria-Maria MacDonald (2001) on Mexican Americans in Texas shows historical patterns of subordination and unequal treatment faced by specific cultural citizenship communities.

These latter works exemplify an important approach used by social scientists for theorizing about Latino families called Critical Race Theory that proposes a method of analysis that incorporates a legal and historical dimension into the interpretation of social science data. Such an approach is important for revealing persistent patterns of low socioeconomic status of Latino subgroups in comparison to other European groups or other Latino groups. For instance, it can bring to the fore distinct differences between Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans and other immigrant groups associated with mode of incorporation into the United States; for example, citizenship by conquest in contrast to voluntary immigration or political refugees, visas for professionals, and surplus low-skilled labor force needs such as Mexican-origin workers.⁶

Latinos represent over twenty Spanish-speaking countries, with significant populations in over twenty other countries. Latinos represent multiple cultural formations that are a result of a blend of European, indigenous, American Indian, and African backgrounds and many religious sects. Further significant differences exist in educational attainment, race, and national origin. These differences have powerfully shaped how historically the dominant culture has perceived who Latinos are. In turn these perceptions have shaped the legal and institutional practices that are significant determinants of the material conditions of Latino families and communities. It is only in the last decade that differences between and among Latinos have been truly acknowledged and recognized. However, most of the mainstream research has looked at Latinos as one cultural group with a focus on low-income Mexican-origin and Puerto Rican families and communities.

5. Latin America is made up of around twenty nations that have different histories, traditions, constitutions, backgrounds, and culture. Latin America can be subdivided into several subregions based on geography, politics, demographics, and culture; some subregions are North America, Central America, the Caribbean, the Southern Cone, and Andean states. In one sense, *Latin America* refers to those territories in the Americas where the Spanish or Portuguese languages prevail: Mexico, most of Central and South America, and the Caribbean (Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico). *Latin America*, therefore, is defined as all those parts of the Americas that were once part of the Spanish and Portuguese Empires. Rangel 1977, 3–5; Skidmore and Smith 2005, 1–10.

6. For an excellent study on intergenerational Mexican-origin groups, see Telles and Ortiz 2008.

Latino Immigration and Incorporation

Mexican Americans have been in the United States for multiple generations as U.S. citizens. Puerto Ricans have been citizens since 1917, and Cubans were granted refugee status and citizenship under the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act.⁷ In this section I provide a brief account of the historical incorporation of these three major Latino subgroups in the United States.

Mexicans

Americans of Mexican descent resided in the Southwest long before the founding of the United States. As the United States expanded westward in the nineteenth century, Mexican Americans found work on the railroads, mines, and farms as well as in other industries. By 1900 their number had reached about 500,000 (Sáenz 2005). As each wave of Mexican immigrants arrived, they faced widespread discrimination, which affected their attempts to establish stable communities and labor and religious organizations (Acuña 2003). During the early 1990s a recession in California severely diminished the need for a surplus labor force, which adversely affected Mexican Americans and the immigrant labor force. Resulting anti-immigrant sentiments served to racialize public policies such as the passage of Proposition 187 in California, which denied undocumented immigrants public social services and fueled witch hunts as undocumented immigrants were reported to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) (Johnson 1995; Vásquez et al. 2008).

Puerto Ricans

Puerto Rico became a possession of the United States at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War in 1898, beginning years of military rule by the United States with its officials, including the governor, appointed by the U.S. President. In 1917, the Jones Act granted Puerto Ricans American citizenship. New York became the primary state that Puerto Rican immigrants settled in, and by 1920 approximately 41,000 Puerto Ricans resided there (Acuña 2003; Laó-Montes and Dávila 2001). Today the political status of Puerto Rico is that of a commonwealth, and though there remains some autonomy, most Puerto Rican affairs have been controlled by U.S. federal agencies since 1952 (Vélez 2008), with most colonial policies based on paternalistic and prejudiced views of the Puerto Rican people, aimed at "Americanizing" the island (Acosta-Belén and Santiago

2006). Puerto Ricans are a racialized mix of indigenous, European, and African heritage and thus racial identity is an important factor in understanding their social location. Race has been relatively invisible in the discourse of Latino ethnic identity but recent scholarship is inserting race as an important construct in understanding Latino social location (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Rodríguez 2000).

Cubans

We most often think of Cubans coming to the United States as political refugees in the wake of the Cuban Revolution in 1959. However, the Cuban presence in the United States dates back to the first half of the nineteenth century when Cubans migrated to U.S. cities including New Orleans, Philadelphia, and New York (Acuña 2003; Vélez 2008). From 1959 to 1963 the revolution led hundreds of thousands of Cubans to leave the island and enter the United States, mostly settling in Miami. In 1966, the Cuban Adjustment Act gave Cubans political asylum and made them eligible for government-subsidized programs. Between 1960 and 1980 the number of Cuban immigrants grew from 50,000 to 580,000 (Acuña 2003). Their more privileged status is connected with their predominantly White racial identity and higher levels of education compared to other Latinos. Twenty-five percent of Cubans ages twenty-five and older—compared with 12.6 percent of all U.S. Latinos—have obtained at least a bachelor's degree (Pew Hispanic Center 2009a).

Specifically in the following sections, I present immigration trend data and social and economic demographic indicators by gender and national origin to illustrate diversity within these subgroups and the connection between different indicators associated with social inequality. I draw on the extensive sociodemographic data on the ten largest Latino subgroups residing in the United States as recently made available from the Pew Hispanic Center at www.pewhispanic.org.⁸ For a more detailed historical account of the incorporation of all three groups, see Juan Gonzalez 2000.

New Latino Immigrant Populations

Since 1970 waves of Latino immigrants have entered and settled in the United States, in the process transforming the makeup of the Latino population. Whereas in the pre-Civil Rights era Mexican American and Puerto Ricans were the majority, the influx of new groups from Central and South America meant an increasingly diverse and heterogeneous mix of peoples from multiple

7. See Fact Sheet on the Cuban Adjustment Act (Public Law 89-732), http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/cuba_adjustment_act.html. Subsequent waves of Cubans who were not all of White race and/or of similar educational background may have had different experiences and not experienced the same integration into U.S. society as first wave Cubans did in 1959. This very brief history does not adequately address all waves of Cuban settlement in U.S.

8. The Pew Hispanic Center is a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping America and the world. It does so by conducting public opinion polling and social science research, by reporting news and analyzing news coverage, and by holding forums and briefings. It does not take positions on policy issues.

national origins, different races, and socioeconomic positions (Horowitz and Miller 1998; Portes 2007). Many of the immigrants from Central America arrived as a result of civil wars and government repression in the region (Dorington et al. 1989; Sabagh and Bozorgmehr 1996). South Americans make up a small proportion of the overall foreign-born Latino population but their numbers have grown rapidly over the past thirty years (Dixon and Gelatt 2006). Countries with relatively stable governments, such as Costa Rica, Honduras, Belize, and most South American countries, still experience economic crises that prompt immigration to the United States in search of economic opportunities.

As of March 2007 all immigrants account for 12.6 percent of the total U.S. population, or one in every eight U.S. residents, the highest percentage in eight decades (Camarota 2007). Immigration flows are tied to such factors as proximity to the United States (as in the case of Mexico), civil unrest in foreign countries (as in El Salvador, Iran and Bosnia), and economic opportunity (associated for instance with the need for unskilled labor as has been the historic case for Mexican peoples). Among foreign-born immigrants, Latinos (of any race) constitute 54.6 percent and Asian/Pacific Islander, 23.0 percent. White (15.4 percent) and Black (7.6 percent) immigrant groups represent smaller percentages of the total foreign-born population (Camarota 2007).

Over the last forty years the steady flow of immigrants from Mexico and the increased flow from Central and South America and the Caribbean have been vital factors in diversifying the nationality and citizenship of Latinos in the United States. From 1970 to 2000, the percentage of foreign-born Latinos has more than doubled from 7.9 percent to 20 percent. Puerto Ricans and Cubans were the largest foreign-born Latino subgroups to enter the United States prior to the 1970s. The 1990s saw a significant shift in national origin of immigrants with Mexicans, Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans representing the largest foreign-born groups in the United States (Portes 2007). Overall, immigrants from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean account for the majority of immigrants (Camarota 2007, 7). Mexico accounts for 31.3 percent of all immigrants, with 11.7 million immigrants living in the United States. Table 2.1 shows trends in immigration of Latino subgroups since 1970 by national origin and by decade.

Illegal or undocumented Latino immigrants have become a key public policy issue in the United States.⁹ According to the March 2007 Current

Table 2.1. Foreign-Born Population by Year of Entry and Nation of Origin (%)

Year of entry	Total Hispanic	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central American	South American
2000 or later	20	21.2	11.3	10.8	20	25.8
1990-1999	36.5	37.9	21	23.7	38.1	32.9
1980-1989	24	23.5	17.6	20.3	27.7	21.3
1970-1979	11.6	11.4	19	12.6	9.6	12.5
Before 1970	7.9	6	31.1	32.6	4.6	7.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2004d.

Population Survey “illegal aliens” or undocumented workers are estimated to compose 5.6 million of the 10.3 million immigrants who arrived in 2000 or later. The best estimates are that 57 percent of undocumented immigrants come from Mexico, 11 percent from Central America, 9 percent from East Asia, 8 percent from South America, and 4 percent from the Caribbean (Camarota 2007). In 1990, for the first time, immigration from Latin America exceeded the combined flows from Asia and Europe, making Latinos the largest foreign-born population in the United States. By 2000, Mexican immigrants constituted the largest immigrant group, accounting for 57 percent of the 3.3 percent of the entire undocumented U.S. population (Acuña 2003; Camarota 2004). Illegal immigrants are more likely to have limited formal education, to have no health insurance, and to live in poverty (Camarota 2007). Undocumented workers are less likely to be in the formal or official labor force (62 percent) than U.S. citizens, and they generally earn considerably less than working U.S. citizens (Passel et al. 2004). Table 2.2 presents national-origin groups by percent of total Hispanic population. The majority of all Latinos in the United States, 64.3 percent, are Mexican American; 9.1 percent are Puerto Rican; 7.8 percent are Central American (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama); 5.5 percent are South American (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela); 3.5 percent are Cuban American; 2.6 percent are Dominican; and 7.5 percent are other self-identified subgroups.

9. Public concern and fear in response to media hypersensationalism about undocumented immigrants have contributed to a hegemonic response. For example, in November 2009, U.S. Census stakeholder organizations stepped up their opposition to a proposal by Senators David Vitter (R-LA) and Robert Bennett (R-UT) to add new questions to the 2010 census on citizenship and immigration status. However Senate action on the Fiscal Year 2010 Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) appropriations bill (H.R. 2847) that focused on citizenship was defeated

(<http://www.ombwatch.org/node/10507>). Most recently, Arizona enacted a stringent immigration law that proponents and critics alike said was the broadest and strictest immigration measure in generations and would make the failure to carry immigration documents a crime and give the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally (<http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/49leg/2r/bills/sb1070s.pdf>). This state law is currently being challenged by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Table 2.2. U.S. Hispanic Population by Nation of Origin, 2007

Nation of origin	Number	Percentage of U.S. Hispanic population
Mexican	29,189,334	64.3
Puerto Rican	4,114,701	9.1
All Other Latino	2,880,536	6.3
Cuban	1,608,835	3.5
Salvadoran	1,473,482	3.2
Dominican	1,198,849	2.6
Guatemalan	859,815	1.9
Colombian	797,195	1.8
Honduran	527,154	1.2
Ecuadorian	523,108	1.2
Peruvian	470,519	1.0
Spaniard	353,008	0.8
Nicaraguan	306,438	0.7
Argentinean	194,511	0.4
Venezuelan	174,976	0.4
Panamanian	138,203	0.3
Costa Rican	115,960	0.3
Other Central American	111,513	0.2
Chilean	111,361	0.2
Bolivian	82,434	0.2
Other South American	77,898	0.2
Uruguayan	48,234	0.1
Paraguayan	20,432	0.0
<i>Total</i>	45,378,596	100

Source: Pew Hispanic Center 2009f.

Emerging Latino Community Settlements: Geographic Concentration and Diasporic Movements

Latinos make up 37 percent of the population in California and Texas. New Mexico's Latino population in 2008 was 45 percent, the highest of any state. Nevada (26 percent), Florida (21 percent), and Colorado (20 percent) all account for large proportions of the overall U.S. Latino population. While still highly concentrated in the Southwest, Southern California, New York, and Florida, Latinos can no longer be thought of as being confined to these areas. From 1980 to 2000 we have seen diasporic settlements of Latinos in almost all states, metropolitan areas, smaller cities, and suburbs. New Latino destinations include diverse metropolitan areas scattered across thirty-five states in every region of the country (table 2.3). Within these metropolitan areas the Latino population grew at rates ranging from 303 percent (Tulsa) to 1,180 percent (Raleigh-Durham) during the years 1980 to 2000 (Suro and Singer 2002). Most recently, South Carolina and North Carolina have seen the highest percentage increases in the Hispanic population—7.7 percent and 7.4 percent

Table 2.3. The New Latino Destinations, 2000

Metropolitan area	Percentage of total Latino population	Latino growth, 1980–2000 (%)
Raleigh-Durham, NC	6	1,180
Atlanta, GA	7	995
Greensboro, NC	5	962
Charlotte, NC	5	932
Orlando, FL	17	859
Las Vegas, NV	21	753
Nashville, TN	3	630
Fort Lauderdale, FL	17	578
Portland, OR	7	437
West Palm Beach, FL	12	397
Washington, DC	9	346
Indianapolis, IN	3	338
Providence, RI	8	325
Tulsa, OK	5	303

Source: Suro and Singer 2002.

respectively between July 1, 2007, and July 1, 2008 (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). No doubt, metropolitan areas will continue to have large Latino communities, but new ones are emerging throughout the United States.

Social and Economic Indicators

When comparing Latino native-born subgroups with the non-Hispanic White (NHW) population, some generalizations can be made. On average Latinos tend to be younger, less educated, and more likely to have low-income, low-skilled jobs. The Latino population is a young population, with 25 percent of children younger than age five, and 22 percent of all Latinos younger than age eighteen. The median age of Latinos is twenty-seven for both sexes compared to forty for NHWs (thirty-nine for males and forty-two for females) and thirty-one years for non-Hispanic Blacks (twenty-nine for males and thirty-three for females) (see table 2.4). Within Latino subgroups, however, there is considerable variation in age. The median age of Cubans is forty, making them older than other Latino groups and older than the U.S. population overall. By comparison, the median age of the U.S. population is thirty-six, and for all Hispanics it is twenty-seven. Puerto Ricans, Salvadorans, and Dominicans all have median ages of twenty-nine years, with Mexican Americans younger (twenty-five years) than the U.S. population and Hispanics overall (Pew Hispanic Center 2009b).

In the year 2000, 69.1 percent of all Latinos participated in the labor force. Overall, Latinos age sixteen and over represented 12.7 percent of the total

Table 2.4. Social and Economic Indicators by Hispanic Subgroup, 2007

Indicators	Median age (male/female)	Educational attainment (%)			Median personal earnings (\$)	Unemployment rate (%)
		High school graduate	Some college	College graduate		
All Latinos	27 / 27	28.2	19.9	12.6	21,048	7.3
U.S. born	17 / 18	31.5	29.0	16.0	23,274	7.6
Foreign born	35 / 38	25.8	13.4	10.1	20,238	7.5
Non-Hispanic White	39 / 42	30.7	28.3	30.5	30,357	5.2
Non-Hispanic Black	29 / 33	34.7	28.6	17.3	24,286	10.1
Asian	34 / 36	17.7	18.4	49.8	32,786	3.2
Mexican American	25 / 25	52.4		9	25,298	7.2
Puerto Rican	29 / 29	71.4		16.2	34,405	10
Cubans	40 / 40	74.2		25	34,405	5.1
Salvadorans	29 / 29	41.3		6.2	25,298	6.0
Dominicans	29 / 29	61.6		15	26,310	8.8

Source: Pew Hispanic Center 2009f.

civilian workforce in 2000 compared to 10.4 percent in 1998. In 2008 Latinos comprised 13.0 percent of the total labor force, and by 2010 the Latino labor force is expected to be larger than the NHB labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008).

Among the Latino subgroups, there are significant differences across groups by level of education, occupation, and income, all of which intersect to determine one's socioeconomic position in society. In the remainder of this section I briefly present an overview of education, occupation, and income and make observations on how these factors are linked to labor force participation and poverty. Table 2.4 shows economic and social indicators by race/ethnicity and Hispanic subgroup.

Education, especially the completed level of schooling, is a major indicator of current and future socioeconomic position. For instance, Cubans and Puerto Ricans are more likely to be high school graduates than Salvadorans and Mexican Americans. Looking at the Latino population as a whole, 12.6 percent of all Latinos have obtained at least a college degree. U.S.-born Latinos are more likely to have a college degree than foreign-born Latinos. If we look across foreign-born groups, on average South Americans and those from the Caribbean such as Cubans (25 percent), Puerto Ricans (16.2 percent), and Dominicans (15 percent) have higher rates of college completion than Mexican Americans (9 percent). Education is also an important benchmark for determining English language proficiency and marketable skills in the labor force. Higher

levels of education generally translate into access to the social and economic opportunity structure. Maternal education has been shown to correlate with academic achievement of children and youth (see chapter 4).

Another indicator of socioeconomic position is occupational status. About 24 percent of civilian-employed Latinos ages sixteen and older work in service occupations. Latinos are more likely than NHWs to work in service, construction, and production jobs. Disparities in occupational positions held and median earnings between Latinos and NHWs and Blacks are evident. Latino men and women are less likely to hold managerial and professional positions in comparison to NHWs and NHBs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008). Non-Hispanic Whites comprise 83 percent of officials/managers, 77.4 percent of professionals, 72.4 percent of technicians, whereas NHBs comprise 6.7 percent of officials/managers, 7.4 percent of professionals, and 12.7 percent of technicians. Latinos comprise 5.6 percent of officials/managers (3.6 percent males and 2.0 percent females), 4.5 percent of professionals (2.1 percent males and 2.4 percent females), and 7.9 percent of technicians (4.6 percent males and 3.3 percent females) (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 2006). Latino and Black men and women are underrepresented in the highest paid occupational categories.

Within the labor force 92 percent of Latinas sixteen years of age and older are employed compared to 97 percent of White women. Latinas in the workforce are disproportionately concentrated in low-paying, part-time, or seasonal jobs and experience twice the rate of unemployment compared to White women. In comparing Latino women with other racial/ethnic women, the disparities are striking. In 2006, Latinas comprised 2.0 percent of official/manager positions, compared to 28.7 percent of White women and 3.2 percent of Black women; 2.4 percent of professionals, compared to 40.4 percent of White women and 5.0 percent of Black women; and 3.3 percent of technicians, compared to 33.9 percent of White women and 7.7 percent of Black women (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 2006).

Disparities in median earnings between Latinos and non-Latinos are evident at all levels of educational attainment. This earning gap is lower for those Latinos (male and female) with at least a bachelor's degree. In 2000 the annual earnings of Latino males between twenty-five and thirty-four years of age with a bachelor's degree or higher was \$39,389, which compared to \$23,566 for their female counterparts. These variations in earnings overlap at different educational levels. In 2000 the median earnings of Latino men twenty-five years of age and older were about \$13,000 less than for White men. Overall, Latino males earned the lowest income (\$23,425), whereas White males (\$36,668) and Black males (\$28,167) received higher earnings. At each educational benchmark (high school diploma, some college but no degree, or an associate degree) the median earnings gap between non-Hispanic White and

Black and Hispanic was between \$6,000–10,000 and the gap between Blacks and Latinos was about \$400–600 with Blacks earning a slightly higher salary. For a bachelor's degree or higher, the median earnings for Whites (\$55,906) were considerably higher than for Blacks (\$42,591) or Latinos (\$42,518). Latino men earned less than their White and Black counterparts at comparable educational levels.

In 2000, the median earnings of Latino women twenty-five years of age and older were about \$6,500 less than their White counterparts. Overall, Latino women earned the lowest income (\$16,601), whereas White (\$23,887) and Black (\$22,028) women received higher earnings. Although these median earnings are lower for women than for men, Latino females at each educational level had lower median earnings than their White and Black counterparts. However White women earned more than Black or Latino women at all levels except for college graduates. With an associate degree, the median earnings for Whites (\$25,480) and Blacks (\$25,411) were higher than for Latinas (\$22,347). For a bachelor's degree or higher, the median earnings for Whites (\$35,472) and Blacks (\$37,898) were higher than for Latinas (\$32,035) (NCES 2003a). Similar to Latino men, Latinas earned less than White and Black counterparts at comparable educational levels. Differences in median personal earnings are shown by U.S.-born Latinos and foreign-born. Accordingly U.S.-born Latinos had higher median personal earnings (\$23,274) than foreign-born Latinos (\$20,238), and Cuban and Puerto Ricans had higher median personal earnings (\$34,405) than Dominican (\$26,310) and Mexican American (\$25,298) groups (Pew Hispanic Center 2008a, 2009b).

Income is an important marker that is associated with educational level and occupational status. Income gaps may represent discriminatory institutional practices that contribute to Hispanic households remaining in lower socioeconomic positions. Higher income provides access to the goods and benefits of society such as employment-based health insurance and residence in safe neighborhoods. The total median income of Hispanic households in 2004 was approximately \$36,000. This was less than three-quarters of the median income of non-Hispanic White households, which was about \$48,000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2004d). The lowest median household income was reported for Dominicans and Hondurans (\$31,256) followed by Salvadorians (\$36,789), and Guatemalans (\$37,912) (U.S. Census Bureau 2004d). These lower incomes may also be associated with underemployment and unemployment among Latino subgroups.

Puerto Ricans have the highest unemployment rate (10 percent) compared to the total U.S.-born rate (7.6 percent). Cubans have the lowest (5.1 percent). Mexican Americans (7.2 percent) are comparable to the total Latino population (7.3 percent) (see table 2.4). Job losses for both Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites emerged primarily in the manufacturing, transportation,

communications, and wholesale trade industries. Both groups gained jobs in entertainment and recreation, hospitals and medical services, and educational services. Job losses for non-Hispanic Blacks, however, were more widespread because they also lost jobs in service-sector industries, such as finance, insurance, real estate, and other professional services (Kochhar 2003).

The spike in Hispanic unemployment has hit immigrants especially hard. Over half (52.5 percent) of working-age Latinos (sixteen years of age and older) are immigrants (Kochhar 2008). Their unemployment rate was 7.5 percent in the first quarter of 2008, marking the first time since 2003 that a higher percentage of foreign-born Latinos was unemployed compared to native-born Latinos. Labor market outcomes for Latino women appear to be worse than for men during 2007. They left the labor force in a greater proportion and experienced greater increases in unemployment than did Latino men. Some 130,000 more Latino women became unemployed in 2007, and their unemployment rate increased from 5.6 percent to 7.0 percent (Kochhar 2008).

These indicators (education level, occupation, income, and unemployment) are highly associated with rates of poverty.¹⁰ In 2007, close to one-quarter of both U.S.-and foreign-born Latinos lived in poverty. The poverty rate of Latinos in 2000 matches the record lows reached in the 1970s. In 2000, a total of 7.2 million Latinos were poor, and approximately 33.6 percent of Latino children were living in poverty compared to 10 percent of White children. Mexican American and Mexican-origin children and Puerto Rican children have the lowest household income and highest rates of poverty. In 2001, the number of poor Latinos rose to 8 million, an increase from 7.8 million in 2000. Table 2.5 displays 2007 poverty rates by age, race, and ethnicity, and Latino nativity (U.S.-born vs. foreign-born). About one in five (20 percent) of Latinos is poor, and while Hispanic children represent 17.7 percent of all children, they constitute 27 percent of all children living in poverty. Foreign-born children are more likely to be poor than U.S.-born children, and about 10 percent of Asian and White children are poor. Children under eighteen are the most likely age group to be poor among all groups (Pew Hispanic Center 2009f).

Researchers who study the effects of social stratification have increasingly viewed wealth as the key to understanding socioeconomic inequality in the

10. Research suggests that, on average, families need an income equal to about two times the federal poverty guidelines to meet their most basic needs (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/10poverty.shtml>). Families with incomes below this level are referred to as *low income*: \$44,100 for a family of four, \$36,620 for a family of three, \$29,140 for a family of two. These dollar amounts approximate the average minimum income families need to make ends meet, but actual expenses vary greatly by locality. For a family of four, the cost of basic living expenses is about \$37,000 per year in El Paso, TX; \$42,000 in Spokane, WA; \$45,000 in Detroit, MI; and \$49,000 in Buffalo, NY. See Wight and Chau 2009.

Table 2.5. Poverty Rates by Age, Race, and Latino Nativity, 2007

2006 household population	Age (years)			All (%)
	Less than 18 (%)	18–64 (%)	65 and older (%)	
All Latinos	27.0	16.3	17.9	20.0
Native-born	26.2	14.5	16.0	20.5
Foreign-born	34.1	17.8	19.6	19.3
Non-Hispanic White	10.5	8.2	7.0	8.5
Non-Hispanic Black	33.5	19.1	19.8	23.4
Asian	10.9	8.8	11.2	9.4
Other	20.9	16.3	14.9	18.1

Source: Pew Hispanic Center 2009f.

Note: Due to the way in which the IPUMS assigns poverty values, these data will differ from those that might be provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

United States (Oliver and Shapiro 1997). *Wealth* is defined as both savings and assets over your lifetime and has been identified as important in understanding intergenerational upward mobility. Hispanic households have less than ten cents for every dollar in wealth owned by NHW households. In 2004 the poverty rate declined for Asians (9.8 percent in 2004, down from 11.8 percent in 2003), remained unchanged for Hispanics (21.9 percent) and Blacks (24.7 percent), and increased for NHWs (8.6 percent in 2004, up from 8.2 percent in 2003) (DeNavas-Walt et al. 2007). Wealth is related to the accumulation of assets over multiple generations, which is transferred to children and heirs in the form of not only money but also social capital such as access to professional networks for job placement, “legacy students,” (children of alumni) or trust funds for education. These invisible resources play an important role in the lives and social location of middle-class dominant culture individuals and for those foreign-born immigrants who come to the United States with human capital such as high social status of family of origin, prior formal college education, and/or marketable skills. In contrast many Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans who have historically been excluded from access to the educational and economic structure have not had the opportunity to acquire possessions and savings to transmit to their children and heirs. Thus, the accumulation of wealth in the form of savings or real estate is the buffer that can help individuals’ weather economic crises such as unemployment or illness and avoid downward mobility and poverty. Middle-class NHW professionals are more likely to have these wealth buffers than middle-class Black and Latino groups. The persistence of the income gap between NHWs and Latinos, limited accumulation of wealth, and limited access to social capital have strongly contributed to the modest intergenerational social mobility of historically underrepresented groups in the United States and their social location.

English Language Proficiency, National Origin, Citizenship Status, and Identity

When addressing the problem of socioeconomic inequality with respect to Latinos, scholars and policy makers often propose solutions that are tied to factors such as English language proficiency (ELP) and citizenship. Of course, these solutions overlook the fact that some Latino groups—such as Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans—already are U.S. citizens and typically have ELP. Many of the common misconceptions about Latinos can be traced back to basic misunderstandings regarding such issues as limited ELP and citizenship status. Approximately 358 million people speak Spanish, making Spanish the fourth (behind Mandarin Chinese, English, and Hindi) most frequently spoken language worldwide. Further, Latinos may speak a variety of dialects, which are derived from Spanish, as well as regional dialects, indigenous languages, and English. About 31 million U.S. residents speak Spanish at home—easily making it the second-most spoken language in the country (Kent and Lalasz 2006). This growth has motivated concerns about the adoption of English by immigrants from Spanish-speaking nations. But a majority of those who speak languages other than English at home report themselves already proficient in English (U.S. Census Bureau 2004a; Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation 2004a).

Almost 70 percent of American adults ages eighteen to sixty-four who spoke Spanish in the home said they also spoke English either “well” or “very well” (U.S. Census Bureau 2004b). Young immigrants (those ages five to seventeen) typically speak English over their native tongues by adulthood. According to Rúbén Rumbaut (2005), “Those who arrive by age 12 or 13 make a quick transition to English—that’s the dividing line. It’s a piece of cake for those who arrive much earlier on, because of the dominance of English in every medium in the United States, from video to the Internet, English wins.” English language proficiency varies by Latino subgroup. Table 2.6 shows that Mexican groups have the third highest citizenship rates after Puerto Ricans and Cubans and second highest rates of English language proficiency (ELP) after Puerto Ricans. Colombians and Dominicans have high rates of citizenship and ELP. Evidence suggests that Spanish-speaking immigrants acquire English fluency during their time in the United States.

Immigrants now account for a large share of the increase in the size of the U.S. population. This is different than in the past when most of the increase in population was from within. Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, many Americans see the growing Latino immigrant population as a threat to the traditional U.S. way of life. Among foreign-born, the length of residence and citizenship status differs by race and ethnicity. The median length of residence of foreign-born was 14.4 years, and 37.4 percent were naturalized citizens. Of the

Table 2.6. English Language Proficiency and U.S. Citizenship by Latino Subgroup, 2007

Country of origin	Speak English proficiently (%)	U.S. Citizen (%)
Mexican	59.1	68.9
Puerto Rican	79.5	99.4
Cuban	56.7	74.1
Colombian	55.0	61.9
Dominican	52.2	67.7
Peruvian	51.3	54.3
Ecuadorian	47.4	59.7
Salvadoran	43.8	52.9
Guatemalan	40.3	46.8
Honduran	37.2	43.5

Source: Pew Hispanic Center 2009b.

foreign-born with residency and citizenship, NHWs had the highest number of years of residency in the United States and the highest rates of naturalized citizenship status (21.2 median years of residency, and 50.3 percent naturalized), followed by Asian/Pacific Islanders with the second highest rates (13.6 years, and 45.7 percent naturalization). Foreign-born Latinos with residency and citizenship had the lowest rates (13.2 years, and 25.7 percent naturalization).

Further, about 60 percent of Latinos are U.S.-born citizens, 10 percent are naturalized citizens, and 30 percent are immigrants or children of immigrants (28 percent) (del Pinal 2008). Among Mexicans, Cubans, and Salvadorans, there is a high degree of variation in citizenship status. Cubans and Dominicans have the highest rates of citizenship acquisition (57.4 and 46.3 percent respectively), while Salvadoran (28.8 percent) and Mexican immigrants (21.9 percent) have the lowest rates of citizenship acquisition (Aguirre and Sáenz 2002).

Several studies have examined issues of American identity of long-time foreign-born residents and naturalized citizens. Key findings from the 2006 Latino National Survey (LNS) report how Latinos identify themselves: as Americans? As Latinos? As members of a particular national group? Approximately two-thirds of the survey's respondents identified themselves as Americans. According to John Garcia (2006),

The respondents reported multiple identities, with Latino being only one of them. When forced to choose only one identity, the number of first generation immigrants who answered "American" was low but it increased greatly for U.S.-born Latinos. High percentages thought of themselves in a pan-ethnic context, and the doubling of such identification since 1989 holds implications for the possibility of Latinos as a political force. Interestingly, a higher sense of pan-ethnicity was found among women, among Latinos/Latinas who identified themselves as

Democrats and moderates rather than as liberals, and among those with more years of education, more involvement in community activities, and more regular media use.

Within the small body of literature concerning citizenship attitudes among Latinos in the United States, Sarah Gershon and Adrian Pantoja (2008) report that the subjective feelings that Latino immigrants have toward the American political system significantly impact their acquisition of U.S. citizenship.¹¹ Just over half of all Hispanic adults in the United States worry that they, a family member, or a close friend could be deported. Nearly two-thirds say the failure of Congress to enact an immigration reform bill has made life more difficult for all Latinos. Smaller numbers (ranging from about one-in-eight to one-in-four) say the heightened attention to immigration issues has had a specific negative effect on them personally. These effects include more difficulty finding work or housing, less likelihood of using government services or traveling abroad, and more likelihood of being asked to produce documents to prove their immigration status (Pew Hispanic Center 2007).

A more simple measure of attachment may be considering how long an immigrant plans on remaining in the United States. Roger Waldinger (2007), in his analyses of the 2006 National Survey of Latinos, reports that while immigrants who gain citizenship are more likely than noncitizens to plan to stay, the difference is slight. Indeed, the great majority of noncitizens plan to live permanently in the United States. Significant differences by country of origin are observed, with Colombians and Dominicans maintaining more active connections with their home country, and Mexicans and Cubans having the least contact. Whether Latino immigrants maintain active, moderate, or limited connections with their country of origin is an important marker of their attitudes toward the United States, their nation, and their own lives as migrants. Those with the highest levels of engagement with their country of origin as a result of children or other family members who have remained have deeper attachments than immigrants whose connections are less robust. They also have more favorable views of their native country in comparison with the United States. These attachments are perhaps strongest for first-generation immigrants and decrease with each generation. Nonetheless, a clear majority of immigrants envision their future in the United States rather than in their countries of origin (Pew Hispanic Center 2007).

11. The final sample used in Gershon and Pantoja's analysis consisted of 1,042 Latino immigrants: 47.6 percent U.S. citizens, 16.0 percent applying for citizenship, 25.7 percent planning on applying, and 8.8 percent who had no plans to apply for citizenship. Mexicans, Cubans, and Salvadorans were the largest groups in the sample.

Globalization and Transnationalism

Globalization and transnationalism have become major topics of intellectual interest in the last few decades. In the most basic terms, *globalization* refers to the economic transformation of the nation-state. In short, the nation-state has changed to meet the needs of transnational corporations and to invest heavily in the transport of capital, goods, and labor across national lines (Brecher 1998). The role of Mexican immigrants in particular as a surplus labor force and the opportunities available in the future economy of the United States in light of reindustrialization and privatization or outsourcing to global entities may have a detrimental effect, as observed by Victor Valle and Rodolfo Torres (2000), "to render the population that occupies Central Los Angeles invisible politically and economically" (9). The concern of the deleterious effects of globalization on Latino men and women is that it will spread to other Latino residential areas of concentration especially urban spaces, increasing economic and social inequality.

Feminist scholars have also studied the relationship between globalization and the gendered division of labor (Toro-Morn 2008). Several domains have grave consequences for the Latino community. Recent studies have identified the following issues: (1) the exploitation of Mexican *maquiladora* workers, (2) the rise of sex and tourist work in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, and (3) the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) on lives of Latino nations. Valle and Torres (2000) discuss the impact of globalization in Los Angeles, stating that "the convergence of these new systems of production and social formations demands a reconsideration of the meaning of so called ethnic workers and their role in the new global economy" (17). Other scholars interested in the cultural and political implications of globalization use the term *transnationalism* to highlight human agency and the multidirectional flows of power, capital, and culture across the globe (Grewal 2005; Ong 1999).

The term *transnationalism* when used in the context of migration and immigration refers to the processes by which immigrants "forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al. 1994, 7; Lee 2007). The concept of transnationalism is used in the more defined way that has been accepted by those researchers and policy makers who attempt to capture distinctive characteristics of contemporary immigrants whose lives cut across national borders while living in other countries (Portes et al. 1999). Transnationalism is important because it has changed over time and with each generation. Most Latino immigrants maintain some kind of connection to their native country by (1) sending remittances, (2) traveling back, or (3) telephoning relatives, but the extent of their attachment varies considerably (Waldinger 2007). Roughly one in ten

(9 percent) Latino immigrants engage in all three of these transnational activities. Sixty-three percent engage in one or two of these activities, while 28 percent do none (Waldinger 2007).

Michael Jones-Correa (2006), speaking about "the decline of transnationalism," noted that immigrants to the United States generally loosen connections with their home countries over time. Contact with family and friends, remittances to home countries, plans to return to the country of origin, and use of Spanish language decline markedly the longer Latinos stay in the United States as well as across generations. For example, seventy-five percent of Latino immigrants report Spanish as the primary language of media use during their first year in the United States. From that point on, the use of English increases dramatically, with a large majority emphasizing the importance of speaking English (as well as looking White and being Christian) as part of being American. What Jones-Correa (2006) speculates is that this is a result of Latinos eventually becoming socialized and integrated in the United States.

Although globalization and transnationalism potentially represent a serious burden that can promote social inequality among U.S. Latinos, exploring the impact of globalization and transnationalism on U.S. Latino families and communities is a much larger subject that goes beyond the scope of this book.¹²

From these demographic data, it is clear that the socially constructed category of Latino/Hispanic is not monolithic but comprises distinct ethnic formations that differ significantly by such factors as size, racial mix, historical incorporation, immigration patterns, and socioeconomic status. Of the twenty distinct Latino subgroups, Mexican-origin, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, and Dominican are the largest groups (see table 2.2). The aggregation of all Central and South Americans into one group comprises a complex mix of people who do not share a common heritage but have distinct historical experiences in their country of origin as well as in the United States. Language, which is often used as the major marker of social integration without accounting for education, appears to be an unreliable measure. For instance, Cubans are the most likely among Latino groups to speak Spanish and yet they have experienced the most upward mobility in the United States.

Mexican-origin and Puerto Ricans continue to be the most disadvantaged economic groups and have the highest levels of segregation in major urban areas. Although the United States has experienced significant immigration from all Latin American countries over the last three decades, Mexicans are still

12. An extensive literature has developed in the last two decades on the demography, economics, and political processes of immigration and globalization. See, e.g., Saenz 2002; Suárez-Orozco 2001; Korzeniewicz and Smith 2000; Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 2006.

associated with immigration and all the negative connotations of that term. A consensus exists that “Immigration has always been transformative—no different now than from the past. Those that push to restrict it simply worry that today’s (im)migrants are transforming the society into something they find alien. It is a reflection of the ignorance of alternative cultures more than an objection to (im)migration itself” (Acosta-Belen and Santiago 1998, 40; Bender 2003; Chavez 2008; Valle and Torres 2000).

In light of the demographic data, it is safe to say that the social context of the Latino families and communities are in transition. Language acquisition, fluctuating economic conditions, acquisition of resident status and citizenship, and continued immigration of Latinos—including family reunification—ensure that Latino families will continue to be subject to fundamental transformations. Given the relative national invisibility of the Latino political agenda, the projected population growth, structural inequalities, and inadequate material conditions of over one-fifth of the Latino population, the ability of these families to provide a healthy environment to raise their families and meet their own needs will do much to determine the social course of the nation in the next generation. Researchers who study Latino families must be prepared to move beyond traditional assumptions and stereotypes of Latino homogeneity and take into account historical, economic, and structural barriers that will continue to play a role in the social trajectory of Latino families in the next generation.

3

How Have Latinos Been Studied?

The challenge is to recognize that we cannot continue to waste human talent because of outdated racial/ethnic conceptualizations. The competence and productivity of minority populations are crucial to our collective well-being.

—García-Coll et al. 1996, 1908

Latinos have been the subject of social science research in the United States since at least the 1960s, but this research has traditionally not been as extensive as is needed nor has it covered all Latino subgroups equally, particularly socioeconomic status (SES) differences. Moreover, in some cases the research methods were flawed. As a result, we have an incomplete, insufficiently nuanced, and at times inaccurate picture of Latinos in the United States. This is especially the case with Latino families. Mexican families are not the same as Cuban families, and Cuban families are not the same as Puerto Rican families. Between the late 1960s and 1990s studies of Latino families focused predominantly on low-income families while giving only limited attention to social, economic, and political context. The major themes of study were family structure, marriage, childbearing, fertility, and feminization of poverty and single-parent households. A second line of inquiry focused on important family relationships and processes including gender role socialization, parent-child relationships, mother-daughter communication, marital relationships, gender role performance, and the role of family in educational achievement. Researchers conducted these empirical studies from multiple perspectives in the major social science disciplines including sociology, psychology, communication/media, and education as well as in the interdisciplines of ethnic studies, social work, and public health.

The goal of this chapter, therefore, is to provide an overview of the scholarly landscape of research on Latino families since the 1960s to show how we got

to where we are today and where we need to go in the future.¹ In the process, I will question the assumptions that have guided much of the traditional research on Latinos and, I hope, help us rethink the models we use to guide the production of knowledge on Latino families. We need to be aware of, and correct for, the implicit cultural lens that has guided much of the research in years past. To achieve a more accurate and more complete picture we need to take into account not only culture but also the historical and structural factors that have powerfully affected the real-life experiences of Latino families in the United States.

Family Formation

Latino families of differing national origins have different histories, structural and cultural integration, regional residence, and family formation and structure. Family structure is one of many factors that influence life course processes and family and child well-being. The majority of Latino households in 2007 were composed of families; that is, individuals related by bloodlines or marriage. Table 3.1 shows that about half of all Latinos are now married, with foreign-born more likely to be married than U.S.-born. Among household types, about 60 percent of U.S.-born and foreign-born Latino households are married-couple families, which is slightly lower than the rate for non-Hispanic White (NHW) households (Guzmán and McConnell 2002; McConnell 2008). Foreign-born children are more likely than U.S.-born children to live in a home with both parents (Hernandez 2004). Asians are the most likely to be married, followed by NHWs. Female-headed households are highest for non-Hispanic Blacks (NHB) and lowest for Asians and NHWs. About one-fifth of Latino family households are headed by a female, and U.S.-born Latinos have higher rates of single female households than foreign-born Latinos.

Latinos live in family households that tend to be larger than households of NHW and NHBs (Brindis et al. 2002; Ramirez and de la Cruz 2002). As table 3.1 shows, over one-quarter of Latino family households consisted of five or more people.² Other data (not shown) provide information on family structure and family size by Latino subgroup and nativity in comparison to European and Asian households. Close to one-third of foreign-born Latinos live in households of five or more persons. When disaggregated by country

1. The work on Latino families is extensive and broad across many specialized disciplinary subfields and areas of interest including substance use, domestic violence, child rearing, elderly care, caretaking and many others. These areas are not covered in this book due to limited scope of my work.

2. Family households consist of two or more people, at least one of whom is related to the householder (the person who owns or rents the housing unit). Latino family households have a Latino householder.

Table 3.1. Median Age, Marital Status, Household Type, and Family Size by Nativity, Race, and Ethnicity, 2007

Indicator	Total	Latino		Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Asian
		U.S. born	Foreign born			
Median age						
Male	27	17	35	39	29	34
Female	27	18	38	42	33	36
Marital status (%)						
Now married	50.8	41.6	58.4	56.6	32.8	62.6
Separated	4.1	3.5	4.5	1.6	4.9	1.4
Divorced	8.4	10.5	6.8	11.7	12.4	5.0
Widowed	3.6	3.7	3.6	7.3	6.9	4.9
Never married	33.1	40.8	26.7	22.7	42.9	26.2
Persons, by household type (%)						
Married couple	59.5	58.9	60.5	66.5	37.5	72.3
Female householder	20.9	24.5	15.4	10.8	38.9	10.0
Male householder	10.3	8.4	13.1	4.7	7.3	5.9
Nonfamily household	9.3	8.2	11.0	18.0	16.2	11.8
Family size (%)						
Two-person families	26.7	33.7	21.6	50.4	40.1	31.2
Three- or four-person families	46.9	47.1	46.7	39.2	45.1	50.5
Five+ person families	26.4	19.2	31.7	10.4	14.8	18.3

Source: Pew Hispanic Center 2009f.

of origin, U.S.-born Mexican children are over twice as likely to live with a single parent (36 percent) than foreign-born Mexican children (15.1 percent) (Hernandez 2004).

Overall, foreign-born children are twice as likely to live in a household with five or more people (29.3 percent) than U.S.-born children (11.5 percent). Foreign-born Mexican households are almost three times more likely to have five or more people (37.8 percent) compared to NHW (10.4 percent) and Cuban households (10.6 percent). Cubans (43.1 percent) were as likely as NHW households (48.7) and almost twice as likely as all Latino households (25.9 percent) to have a two-person household. European (9.8 percent) and Asian (19.2 percent) immigrant households have family size households more consistent with United States households while immigrant Mexican (37.8 percent) and Central American (39.3 percent) had close to 40 percent of families or households with five or more people compared to 22 percent for South American households (Fry and Gonzales, 2008; Pew Hispanic Center 2008c). The patterns of family formation and family size have not changed considerably in the last decade. The reason Latino families have larger household size is associated with economic factors, educational level, and generational status.

Latinos who live in extended families tend to do so because of their stage in the life course or to facilitate sharing of caretaking responsibilities for children and older family members (Blank and Torrecilha 1998). Living arrangements vary with generational status, with first-generation Mexican and Cuban immigrants more likely to live in extended family households than second- or third-generation families (Landale et al. 2006). Family income or median household earnings are also associated with large household size and extended family arrangements. Arriving in a new country requires time to learn a language and find employment and thus extended family and nonfamily households provide social and economic support while the individual seeks self-sufficiency.

Here it is worth making a few observations about the importance of family size, income, and educational attainment of mothers. It is well known that family size and socioeconomic position (SEP) influence family functioning and processes that critically shape a child's access to early learning activities and future academic achievement (Lee and Burkam 2002). Although having a two-parent family is considered most favorable for providing positive learning and schooling experiences, this axiom holds most true when both parents have a decent standard of living, have knowledge of their role as advocates in the school system, and have the emotional energy and economic means to provide extracurricular opportunities for their children. For example, children in low-income families with a large household size tend to demonstrate lower cognitive and academic abilities than children from small household sizes (Lee and Burkam 2002). I argue along with other scholars that we cannot study Latino family processes, childhood socialization, and development without recognition of the basic associations of family structure, family size, family income, maternal education as an indicator of SEP, and neighborhood effects or community context (García-Coll et al. 1996; Baca Zinn 1995; McLoyd et al. 2000; Lareau 2003).

Theoretical Assumptions in the Study of Families

Scholarship on family processes has historically used middle-class Euro-dominant culture groups as a baseline for assessing the values, norms, and behaviors of all families, whether White or non-White. This predominantly normative approach assumes that well-educated, middle-class groups are the cultural standard against which all other groups can be judged. Such research, however, serves in many respects to maintain the unequal treatment of ethnic group families based on a superior-versus-inferior binary (Bonilla-Silva 2006). Even within the field of family studies, researchers reinforce this false binary by generalizing research findings about low-income Latino families to the entire Latino population.

Arland Thornton (2005) has provided valuable insight into this problem by analyzing the assumptions that informed the foundations of family sociology.

In the most basic terms, he argues that a developmental idealism perspective has permeated family studies research since the beginning. Developmental idealism is based principally on four concepts: (1) modern society is good and attainable, (2) the modern family is good and attainable, (3) the modern family is a cause and effect of a modern society, and (4) individuals have the right to be free and equal (8–10). These concepts are the bedrock of highly industrialized societies such as the United States and the United Kingdom (England), where modern is systematically pitted against tradition, rural against suburban, and developed against underdeveloped. Moreover, the developmental paradigm assumes a social and political trajectory whereby non-European societies move in the social organization continuum toward values, preferences, and behaviors similar to what are deemed “more developed, more civil, and more advanced” (245). From its inception, the study of new societies (which evolved from privileged Western Europeans maintaining travel logs of “unknown family practices” in places such as India and Africa) the study of families has been conducted in comparison to invisible cultural referents; namely, White, privileged, middle-class families. Central to early family studies scholarship, as noted by Thornton, was the view that families would naturally progress, develop, and embrace Western European cultural norms (107). These developmental assumptions, not unexpectedly, served as normative guides to social science theorizing about racial and ethnic groups in the United States.

An undeniable feature of the social sciences is that fields of inquiry systematically build on prior ways of thinking and theoretical paradigms. It is essential, therefore, that we interrogate the epistemological roots of the intellectual traditions (family theory and assimilation/acculturation theory) that have been used to capture the lived experiences of Latino subgroups in the United States. One barrier to understanding the heterogeneity of Latino families is the lack of substantive research on Latino subgroups, and much of the research conducted has focused primarily on low-income Mexican and Mexican American families, treating them as representative of all Latino families (Vega 1995; Weaver 2005). In the process, a set of values has been ascribed to all Latino families regardless of national origin and SEP. Researchers and the media typically portray Latino families with strength, solidarity, and unity derived from their “familism”—a form of family values in which the needs of the family as a group are more important than the needs of any individual family member (Hurtado 1995; Sabogal et al. 1987). In reality, “family values” are important in all cultures, and the role of family is integral in maintaining sources of social support such as child care, family tradition, and cultural expression. Yet cultural values also change through cultural encounter with other groups, and family members develop new forms of expression and attachment over time. In Latino families, attachment varies within and across groups and differs by national origin and generational status (Landale et al. 2006; Organista 2007).

The body of literature on Latinos persists in defining its values as a static entity with limited recognition of the structural barriers to integration in a new social context and differences in adaptation associated with SEP. Since the 1990s, scholars have increasingly questioned the use of a theoretical approach that viewed Latino families as monolithic and invariably governed by traditional, patriarchal values and behaviors.

Over time, certain researchers began to challenge paradigms that viewed Latinos as a culture-bound group, yet often they failed to incorporate important factors such as the intersection of race, ethnicity, SEP, intragroup variability, community context, and racism (García-Coll et al. 1996; Baca Zinn 1994, 1995; Baca Zinn and Wells 2000; McLoyd et al. 2000; Perez 2004). Even today the culture-bound perspective continues to permeate our perceptions and the theoretical lenses through which we explore Latino families. Thus it is as important as ever to heed the warning given by Cynthia García-Coll et al. (1996) regarding the role of family in child development: "There is no theoretical or empirical reason to assume that individual primary developmental processes operate differently for children of color than for Caucasian children in Western society" (1893).

Culture-Driven Family Perspectives: Latino Families as "Other"

All too often, to understand the present we need to return to the past. Two aspects of family research prior to around 2000 are striking: (1) narrow conceptual models were used to understand family structure and formation and (2) a limited inclusion of families in data sets that reflected the changing demographics of U.S. society (McLoyd et al. 2000, 1071). Social science research on Hispanic/Latino (Puerto Rican and Mexican American) families in America began as early as the 1920s but was relatively rare prior to 1960. This changed during the 1960s and 1970s. In those decades, two research methods were most common: (1) ethnographic approaches to describe culturally based practices and behaviors and (2) secondary analyses of census data to describe high rates of fertility, poverty, and educational attainment. While some of this research was extremely important and no doubt seminal, much of it was also deeply flawed, and unfortunately it has shaped the scholarly inquiry on Latino families ever since. Take, for instance, the anthropologist Oscar Lewis, best known for his work on the lives of poor people and for his theory that there is a "culture of poverty" among the poor that transcends national boundaries. He published a number of books including *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (1959), which was intended, he said, "to give the reader some glimpses of daily life in five families on five perfectly ordinary days." Another book, *La Vida* (1965), focused on a single Puerto Rican family living in the "culture of poverty." Lewis's work gained tremendous public attention

at the time, and while he was undoubtedly motivated by a belief in the need to ameliorate poverty, his work unwittingly contributed to a stereotype of all Mexican Americans and Puerto Rican Americans as culturally different and as "social problems" for American society—a stereotype that lives on today.

From Culture to Acculturation

Culture and assimilation have been central themes in the study of Latinos in all disciplines in the forty-plus years since the publication of Oscar Lewis's influential books. Early models of assimilation were designed to assess progress toward "Americanization" or normative cultural standards. Over time, however, many researchers questioned the applicability of the assimilation construct in view of the perceived resistance of Latino groups to completely abandon their culture. Consequently, the concept of acculturation emerged to replace assimilation. Underlying the concept of acculturation remained the assumptions that racial/ethnic/cultural groups would progress toward normative dominant culture behaviors. The epistemology of the construct of culture and acculturation provides insights into origins and meaning.

Culture as a concept has multiple disciplinary definitions, and its meanings have evolved over time (Finkelstein et al. 1998). Culture is etymologically derived from the Latin word *cultura*, which means cultivation. In anthropology, culture is defined as concepts, beliefs, and principles of action and organization (Trueba 1991). In sociology, culture is defined as "[t]he accumulated store of symbols, ideas and material products associated with a social system, whether it is an entire society or a family. It does not refer to what people actually do, but to the ideas they share about what they do and the material objects that they use" (A. Johnson 2000). In psychology, culture is defined by "shared attitudes and habits, called schemas, adaptive to one's family, ethnic community, and occupation" (Rudmin 2003, 10). The cultural systems of societies differ from one another (e.g., American society is different than Chinese society, and Greek society is different than Iranian society) and differ within groups, making them unique in the way knowledge or cognition is stored, formed, and transmitted (Spradley 1972). While there is no single, consistent definition of culture within the social sciences, one recurring problem common to much social science literature is the failure to account for the varying effects of social inequality on cultural expression, enactment, and adaptation of ethnic groups to dominant hegemonic groups. Culture has become a negative identity marker for U.S. Latinos. Latinos are and have been perceived by dominant culture as a subordinate culture, resistant to embracing normative cultural standards, leading to diminished social and economic opportunities. In trying to understand the perceived resistance to normative hegemonic standards, social scientists developed acculturation measures.

The acculturation construct was developed by sociologists in the early twentieth century out of the idea of the “melting pot” theory (Persons 1987). The theory of the melting pot viewed acculturation as an irreversible, three-stage process consisting of contact, accommodation, and assimilation. Multiple revisions of this construct have expanded the notion of acculturation, but the underlying assumptions and focus on culture have not changed considerably (Social Science Research Council 1954; Teske and Nelson 1974; Berry 1980; Cuellar et al. 1980; Padilla and Perez 2003). The origins of the acculturation construct are rooted in the study of immigrants who recently arrived in the United States, with the goal of measuring the effects of the interaction of new immigrant groups with the host culture (Carter-Pokras and Bethune 2009; Zambrana and Carter-Pokras 2010). There are various disciplinary definitions of *acculturation*, as shown in table 3.2. For each the foundational root of the definition lies in the notion of change or integration as each social group interacts with another culture. What these definitions fail to account for are difficult-to-quantify forces such as the effects of the dominant culture’s view of subordinated groups by conquest, and for immigrant racialized Latino groups such as Mexicans, the historical roots of the relationship between the two cultures, and the legal treatment of that ethnic group. All these factors represent barriers to the integration and acceptance of racialized Latinos in U.S. culture. The real issue is whether the forces at play were (or are) resistance or exclusion.

In short, a basic problem with much of the theorizing on acculturation is that it is often marred by flawed assumptions. The first assumption is that an individual born outside the United States must abandon his or her culture of origin to be acculturated. A second assumption is that an individual is free to choose to become an integral part of American society. Yet Mexican Americans who are an integral part of American society are not perceived or accepted as

Table 3.2. Examples of Definitions of the Term *Acculturation*

Academic discipline	Definition
Anthropology	“Culture change under conditions of direct contact between the members of two societies” (Winthrop 1991, 3)
Psychology	“The process by which groups or individuals integrate the social and cultural values, ideas, beliefs and behavioral patterns of their culture of origin with those of a different culture” (VandenBos 2007, 3)
Public health	“Adoption and assimilation by a person or social group of the cultural customs, traditions, practices and behavior of what previously had been for them an alien culture” (Last 2007, 306)
Sociology	“Two or more cultures come in contact with one another through images in the mass media, trade, immigration, or conquest so that they affect one another. With acculturation, a dominant group imposes its culture on subordinate groups so effectively that these become virtually indistinguishable from the dominant culture” (Johnson 2000, 70)

Source: Zambrana and Carter-Pokras 2010, 19.

full citizens. An unexplained use of the acculturation scale is its administration to U.S.-born Mexican Americans and the comparison of scores between Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans. (The overwhelming majority of Mexican Americans speak English as their primary language and have been in the United States for multiple generations, in many cases long before Europeans settled in North America.) In reflecting on this conundrum, it seems to me that it reveals the belief that U.S.-born Mexican Americans are perceived to be perpetual non-Americans or forever foreigners.

The third flawed assumption is that most scales use proxy measures that rely mostly on language-based questions, an indirect measure of the cultural process (Perez and Padilla 2000). Often multiple factors that are associated with the process of acculturation including educational level, family structure, power relationships between the majority and minority groups, and social stigma are left unmeasured. Common to social science definitions of acculturation is that they are based on the initial assumptions of culture-driven models derived from earlier work and are either operationalized using individual proxy indicators of a unidirectional process such as English-language proficiency, self-reported ethnic identity, or a composite of these indicators (Giddens 1993; Johnson A. 2000; Schaefer 2002; VandenBos 2007). Noteworthy, limited English-language proficiency in and of itself is not a major barrier to integration or acceptance in U.S. society if one has high professional status. Thus, use of English language proficiency and ethnic identity do not measure the deleterious perceptions of Latinos by dominant culture or structural barriers such as geographic segregation and other exclusionary discriminatory institutional practices that have contributed to a portrayal of Latino families as resistant to progress or modernization.

In other words, the portrayals of Latinos continue to focus on low-income Latinos and immigrants who do not measure up to White middle-class normative standards; those Latinos who possess the class and race privilege of middle-class normative standards of mainstream society remain invisible. One can argue that the epistemological roots of the acculturation construct are based on some cultures being viewed as inferior to White dominant culture. A central question, then, is why do some ethnic groups remain in subordinate social locations while others achieve upward mobility and economic success?³

3. Historically many White ethnic cultures were excluded from full participation in American society. However these ethnic groups such as the Irish, Italian, and Jewish communities were voluntary immigrants; did not have a history of conquest in the United States; many arrived with human capital (e.g., education or a crafts skill) similar to many Cubans and South Americans; and racially were eventually able to claim their whiteness. As Bonilla-Silva (2006) observes, different ethnic groups who are closer phenotypically to dominant culture are more likely to access the economic opportunity structure in the United States. Those groups who fit the criteria of “honorary white” based on skin color, class, and immigration status can be bicultural (segmented assimilation) and experience more equitable access to the social and economic opportunity structure (179–180).

Latinos are the most studied group under the rubric of culture or ethnic group, acculturation, and immigrant status, especially Mexican-origin groups (Chun et al. 2003). While acculturation research may acknowledge the role of socioeconomic factors (see, e.g., Organista 2007), culture as implicit in the acculturation measure is foregrounded as a determinant of disparities. Acculturation studies as a whole produce a panethnic view of the Latino population as a foreign, homogeneous cultural group, ignore differences by Latino subgroup, SES and nativity, and omit the impact of structural and institutional forces on an ethnic group's ability to integrate; that is, have access to the opportunity structure to sustain family well-being and upward mobility. In a review of family scholarship on racial and ethnic families, Shannon Weaver et al. (2001) focus on the challenges family scholars confront in the study of Latino families. The authors encourage studies on Latinos by SEP, educational attainment, subgroup, geographic location and other contextual factors. They emphasize the need to be "clear about which Latinos they are sampling" and "to be cautious about generalizing from one subgroup to another" (925). Further, they state, "regardless of which racial and ethnic group family scholars are studying, they will have to consider the contexts in which relationships and families are embedded" (927), and they astutely acknowledge that "the ability to adapt our work to trends in family diversity may be impeded by the social and political climate. The current political climate suggests that some people are threatened by changes and are clinging to the status quo or their perceptions of it" (936).

This body of work on acculturation and Latino families has been plagued by multiple conceptual and methodological issues. As a result, acculturation findings reveal conflicting and inconclusive results with respect to the domains of marriage, parental socialization, child-rearing, and developmental child outcomes. Culture-driven models as exemplified by acculturation have contributed to a stagnant theorizing regarding Latino families and the factors that have played a role in family formation and development, particularly the political, economic, and social processes associated with family life course processes.

Latino Families and Culture

In understanding the social construction of the concept of the Latino family as theorized in U.S. social science, a selected review of the literature provides a map of the study of the Latino family. Cultural values have framed the entire discourse of familism as a form of social structure in which the needs of the family as a group are more important than the needs of the individual family member. Latino and non-Latino social scientists alike proffer multiple ways of defining family. The vast majority of studies, predominantly on low-income

Mexican American and Puerto Rican families, have theorized a broad set of attributes about Latino family cultural enactment that include a strong sense of commitment, dedication, and service to family (Hurtado 1995); extrafamilial responsibilities as part of cultural norms; and personal aspirations and self-sacrifice driven by familial factors (García 2001; Massey et al. 1995; Rodriguez 2000). Latino families have also been characterized as having a strong sense of caring for each other, rely on each other for support (e.g., economically, psychologically) (Brice 2001); and seek to have close geographic proximity to family and extended family members (Trueba 2002).

Investigators also extend the attributes of Latino families and argue that self-esteem and self-identity are byproducts of strong Latino family ties (Pérez et al. 1997). *Familia* is synonymous with security, nurturance, love, and comfort; the concept of family is idealized as something sacred (Baca Zinn and Eitzen 2002; Rodriguez 1999); and *compadrazgo* or co-parenting represents a value on extended family. Family and extended families are viewed as centers for survival and nurturing (Massey et al. 1995), family support, transmission of Latino culture that provides stability, and coping mechanisms (Abalos 1998; Farkas 1996). Scholars have reported that regardless of their national origin or individual group membership, Latinos hold a strong sense of family unity and preference for extended family networks (Hidalgo 1998; Hurtado 1995; Trueba 1999). These *familia* characteristics are representative of the values of Latino families but are also representative of many other cultural groups' family values globally and in the United States. In American culture these family values may be similar but are culturally enacted and expressed in different forms depending on SEP, race, nativity, language, and religion.⁴

4. Religion as an important factor in family processes has received limited attention, and its role in family life is beyond the scope of this book. However, several informational points are in order because religion is often cited as important among Latinos. In a commissioned paper, Joseph Palacios (2003) describes the importance of access to Catholic schools as vehicles of educational achievement and upward mobility. Yet he argues that actual programs to enrich or assist the Latino family are virtually nonexistent (258). He also points out that a large sector of the Latino community does not regularly attend religious services and is the "unchurched" (263). Interestingly, researchers often identify religious affiliations and tradition, particularly Catholicism, as an integral part of Latino culture as connected to childbearing and passive gender roles. For example long-standing explanations for why Latino women have more children include their being opposed to birth control and abortion and being passive recipients of their destiny as "good" Catholic women, wives, and mothers. Although Latinas may hold pro-life and anti-contraception attitudes based on religious attitudes, for many Latinas limited education, lack of sex education, and economic access to contraception are also important factors in higher fertility patterns and a presumed lack of agency. The association between Latin Americans and Catholicism is so strong that it belies a surprising fact: Almost one quarter of all Latinos in the United States are Protestants (Murray 2006). Of the 41.3 million Latinos in the United States in 2004, about 23 percent (9.5 million) identify themselves as Protestants or other Christians (including Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons). Moreover, 37 percent (14.2 million) of all Latino Protestants and Catholics say they have been born again or are evangelical. One percent of Latinos identify with another world religion,

The major explicit argument by a substantial number of scholars, particularly Latino scholars, has been that Latinos/Hispanics share many commonalities. For example, language is claimed to be a cultural marker and a principal means through which socialization processes occur. Language has been described as one of the most powerful and pervasive purveyors of culture that holds a fundamental role in the transmission of beliefs, values, and customs and “is at the heart of Latino cultures” (Brice 2001; Hidalgo 1998, 113). For many Latinos, the Spanish language represents a common bond that promotes solidarity within a diverse population, a cultural link, despite its many dialects and transmutations (Massey et al. 1995), and a bridge between nationalistic/individual and collective identities that provide a unifying force for ethnic identity (Larraín 2000; Darder et al. 1997). These claims are challenged by data that show that by the third generation, few individuals of Latino heritage speak Spanish yet many of these third-generation Latinos may self-identify as Latino. The point is that language per se does not always offer the bridge between individual and collective identities. Thus language, religious, and cultural commonalities are relevant perhaps for specific national subgroups but have shifted in meaning with the expansion of Latino national groups and resettlement communities in the United States.

In effect, these “cultural asset approaches” in the social sciences by Latino scholars have sought to counteract existing cultural-deficit model approaches in investigations of Latinos by identifying unique strengths, cultural assets, and language. Inadvertently, this scholarship in many ways has reinforced negative formulations of Latino families as “foreign and inassimilable,” essentialized the category of Latino, and contributed to reinforcing Latinos as “other” by emphasizing difference. Although acknowledging difference is important, simultaneously challenging the social and racialized construction of Latino culture as both different and deviant is imperative within the ethnocentricity of U.S. social science.

Unquestionably culture is an important identity marker. However the major argument here is for a theoretical intervention that deconstructs culture and its measurement by acculturation as a negative identity marker in social science theorizing and reconstructs it as an attribute that captures ways of knowing and being that may strengthen individual ethnic identity and family processes. Latino culture in the United States intersects with race, SEP, nation, gender, and other ascribed statuses, all of which influence how an individual performs his/her role and their own self-construction of cultural or ethnic identity. An

such as Buddhism, Islam, or Judaism. Another 37 percent of all Latinos report being atheist or agnostic (Espinosa et al. 2005). Although 70 percent of Latinos in the United States—the majority of whom are Mexican American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban—identify as Catholic, adherence to religious beliefs, values, practice, and affiliations differ by national origin and SEP.

explicit assumption inherent in this process of identity is that *culture* is a fluid and dynamic process that evolves over time; adapts in different geographic locations and in particular historical time periods; and is shaped by history, contemporary events, and reception by host society (Portes 2000). Thus I argue that culture is not a principal predictor of social inequality. However ethnic/cultural groups such as Mexican-origin, American Indians/Native Americans, have historically experienced social inequality in the form of exclusionary institutional practices that contribute to low SES and economic and social marginalization. By decentering cultural/ethnic group as a predictor of social inequality and centering SEP, social scientists can disrupt the subordinate–dominant cultural binary (Zuberi 2001). Inserting SEP (poverty) and its correlates as important factors that contribute to differences can shift our conventional theorizing lens regarding individual and group attributes as responsible for their own marginalization and provide powerful insight into how the historical and contemporary power relationships between Latino ethnic subgroups and the dominant culture group have shaped social location and perceptions of Latinos in the American public imagination. García-Coll et al. (1996) argue in discussing family socialization processes and child development processes that for existing theoretical models to address critical aspects of the environment such as the influences of social position, racism and its derivatives, and segregation, these factors need to be at the core—not the periphery—of the model (1908).

In conclusion, building on an invisible comparative marker of White, educated, and middle-class European society; American sociology developed its frameworks of assimilation and acculturation theory to assess the progress of immigrant groups and then of racial and ethnic groups in the United States. A preeminent focus on culture as the lens to understand differences between Latinos and NHWs, the normative point of reference, has yielded a set of results that marginalize Latino families as “deviant,” as aptly observed by William Vega (1995):

Latino family literature is framed by discussions of *familism*, the behavioral manifestations of Latinos that reflect strong emotional and value commitments to family life. Although other family groups are also family-centered, the style of Latino *familism* presumably makes it distinct from the behavior of non-Hispanic Whites. However the empirical evidence is sparse and inconsistent and the traditional family archetype is controversial because the social science literature has attributed negative social outcomes to it. (7)

Family Socialization Processes

Family is a social arrangement that contributes to economic stability and support and advocacy systems for children and adults and is a central institution in shaping gender socialization and establishing parameters of control

(Hunt et al. 2000). Scholars in the field of family studies and generally social science have conducted research on Latino families with sparse attention to key variables such as access to social and economic resources to support family functioning and well-being. Although parental support, in the form of information, economic and emotional, can be effective in promoting a child's developmental growth, a significant relationship exists between low family economic resources, parent-child communication, and early educational leaving (Davalos et al. 2005). The association between these factors is almost self-evident. Yet in the study of Mexican American youth and family processes, the body of knowledge often does not take into account the consequences of structural inequality in the neighborhood, community, and schools on family processes especially family relationships and gender role expectations. Andrew Fuligni (2007) edited a groundbreaking volume that addresses how institutional expectations based on cultural/ethnic stereotypes are perpetuated and hinder the academic achievement of racial/ethnic students. The authors also cogently illustrate how students themselves in spite of the institutional expectations create agency for themselves by challenging stereotypes and fully participating in the educational pipeline. For example, in a 2009 interview study with Latinas, a current college student reported that she had experienced very low expectations from her teachers in high school (National Woman's Law Center and Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund 2009). She stated:

Generally, academic expectations are lower. You are supposed to get married and have kids and not set high academic goals for yourself. For example, at one point when I told a teacher I was heading away to college, he said he gave me two years before I was married and pregnant. (20)

This example cogently captures the expectation by a school official of stereotypical gender role performance of marriage and pregnancy by a Latina adolescent. These stereotypic representations discourage alternative avenues of opportunity; yet, they also capture the material reality of many young Latinas in the community.

Among low-income Latino families, socialization of children is deeply embedded in the material conditions of their parents' lives. Several observations are representative of the gender-specific scholarly findings on low-income Mexican and Puerto Rican families:

- Specific family responsibilities, such as sibling care and economic contributions, in low-income Latino families have been linked to less time and emphasis on educational goals (Gándara 1995, 1999; Zambrana et al. 1997).

- Closely related are more traditional gender role attitudes and behaviors among low-income families that hinder independence in pursuing one's individual goals, such as education (Gonzalez-Ramos et al. 1998).
- Latino mothers are viewed as passive yet respected and honored as the heart of the family (Rodriguez 1999). Fathers are described as the head of the household, seat of authority, and provider for the family (Mirande 1997).

In the study of Latinos, traditional gender roles that are associated with SEP have been subverted into deviant cultural characteristics of male dominance and female submissiveness characterizing familial processes, especially in regard to value on education and gender role socialization. Historically, low-income families have experienced the necessity of having their children contribute in instrumental ways such as child care so that parents could earn a living to support the family. For Latino girls and boys, traditional gender role expectations are more likely to exist in low-income Latino families than in middle-class Latino families. Parent's material conditions (poverty) generate a necessity of support from both daughters and sons—often in terms of household chores and child care responsibilities—that may limit their acquisition of the skills required to negotiate the larger social world to succeed academically and socially (Rivera and Gallimore 2006). Family roles and processes are further complicated yet reinforced by societal racialized perceptions and stereotypes of the class, ethnic, and gender expressions of Latino girls and boys in public locations. As a result, these youth often experience serious barriers in both school and work settings that hinder their access to the educational and economic opportunity structure (Marlino and Wilson 2006; Bettie 2003).

The scientific discourse on Latino family socialization processes requires shifting the lens to account for an understanding that the transmission of values are filtered through racial/ethnic origins, class background, multiple prisms of poverty, lived experiences, and treatment in the host society. However, parents are only one influence on their children's lives; today's youth are also strongly influenced by secondary socialization agents such as schools and media. These three socializing agents intersect and shape the nuances of the values transmitted, how youth interpret the messages, and their ability to use values and skills to negotiate their place in U.S. society. To more deeply understand how families and youth successfully negotiate their role in the larger society, we need to look more closely at how cultural identity markers—ethnic subgroup, SEP, and race—serve as yardsticks for assessing behaviors and performance in the larger society and act as facilitators of integration or exclusion from U.S. society. Thus the study of Latino families and youth can best be understood by examining the social forces

including neighborhood effects and perceptions of school representatives on the developmental processes and life course of family members. Familial patterns and processes in low-income families are significantly linked to material conditions as they are in middle-class families. As observed by Crouter et al. (2006):

The literature on the implications of parents' employment for families and children has focused almost exclusively on European-American, middle-class and professional families; much less is known about the implications of parents' work for minority families and children. This lacuna is problematic because members of minority groups are more likely to experience negative occupational conditions, such as low-wages, discrimination and underemployment, which may pose challenges for them and their families. (843)

However, the cultural-driven theoretical perspectives on Latino families have rarely captured the importance of these aforementioned factors. In the latter part of the twentieth and early twenty-first century, multiple critiques have been proffered on the theoretical and methodological flaws inherent in these perspectives.

Critiques of Cultural-Driven Models

A critical review of the literature of Latino family studies yields four major themes in the study of family life. First, a primary and persistent theme is that Latino ethnicity, as a cultural marker, holds primacy as a major analytic category. A second central theme is that the body of knowledge on Latino families does not take into account historical modes of incorporation, treatment, and representations of Latino subgroups. Third, few studies incorporate adequate recognition of the material conditions associated with poverty and its consequences for family processes. Fourth, studies conducted on low-income Latino subgroups are not generalizable to all subgroups and are not representative of high-income Latino groups.

Clara Rodríguez (2004) provides an assessment of the subthemes of the literature on Puerto Ricans prior to the 1970s. These subthemes included a lack of historical context on the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States; the dominance of an assimilationist, immigrant framework; a tendency to overgeneralize to an entire population from small numbers or extreme cases; a single-group focus with no comparative and equivalent population groups; and the application of paradigms, categories, and contexts on Puerto Rico that were informed only by U.S. experiences (289). Maxine Baca Zinn (1995) challenges the dominant assimilationist and modernization paradigms that have ruled the social science literature on Latino families by decentering

the set of assumptions that underlie traditional social science frameworks that have falsely universalized family forms. She argues that:

- Families are socially constructed, shaped by specific historical, social, and material conditions.
- Family development and processes are closely linked with other social structures and institutions.
- Gender is a basic organizing principle of society that shapes families in historically specific ways.
- Race shapes family life and is an integral organizing principle in the United States.

In a subsequent thoughtful and rigorous review article, Maxine Baca Zinn and Barbara Wells (2000) cogently address the limitations of family studies as based on a problem-oriented framework for the study of Latino families. The authors describe several flaws in the analytic categories used to study Latinos families.

- Diversity and heterogeneity within Latino families have been ignored.
- The findings for Mexican-origin families have been generalized to all Latinos.
- Hispanics are officially defined as an ethnic group, and are also defined as a separate racialized group.
- Native-born and immigrant Latinos are subordinated in similar ways.
- Definitional and measurement flaws include inconsistent definitions of the concepts of familism and extended family systems.

Because of inadequate conceptualization of structural factors such as SEP, segmented labor markets, and institutional discrimination and racism associated with differences in family development and processes, knowledge production has been limited in advancing our understanding of Latino families in the United States (Baca Zinn and Pok 2002).

Critique of the empirical work on Latino groups in general and of Latino family studies, in particular, has been growing. Dominant or mainstream social scientists who have a privileged voice in the academic world (with few exceptions) often conduct research on Latino groups and families without theorizing about the development of these groups within the larger United States context (Rodríguez 2008, 5). Additionally, these social scientists frequently explain family processes outside the structural and contextual arena such as unemployment, economic development, and globalization, all of which effect low-income Latino families (Baca Zinn and Pok 2002; Perez 2004).

Edna Viruell-Fuentes (2007) presents cogent arguments regarding the assumptions of acculturation research: (1) culture is located within an individual,

and cultural traits are inherent to members of a particular group (instead of envisioning culture as a system that is socially constructed); and (2) the onus of culture is placed on the individual and is likely to lead to individual-centered interventions at the expense of addressing the structural contexts that reproduce social and economic inequities. Thus attention is diverted from examining the historical, political, and economic contexts of migration. Linda Hunt et al. (2004) similarly provide a cogent critique of acculturation research in the field of public health and conclude that "in the absence of a clear definition and an appropriate historical and socio-economic context, the concept of acculturation has come to function as an ideologically convenient black box, wherein problems of unequal access to health posed by more material barriers, such as insurance, transportation, education, and language, are pushed from the foreground, and ethnic culture is made culpable for health inequalities" (982). These critiques highlight the major flaw of prior research that does not include the intersection of ethnicity and SEP to better explain disparities in wealth, education, and family processes between and across Latino subgroups and NHWs. Observed disparities, however, have more to do with access to social capital and variables such as SEP and racism than to cultural capital. In other words, if low-income Latino families were compared with low-income NHWs, the results would most likely generate similar family patterns (Newman and Massengill 2006, 429).

More recent work embraces a more complex perspective on family development and acknowledges the role of nation, SEP, and other nonfamily factors in the ability of families to fulfill their roles. For example, a study of Central and South American families provides some insight on family structure and functioning. Jennifer Glick and Jennifer Van Hook (2002) report that Central and South American parents are more likely to live in households in which their adult children provide most of the household income and this dependency decreases with duration in the United States. Another study on family processes found that 96 percent of the Central Americans had experienced a disruption in their family unit because of separation during immigration; that is, remaining in their home country until parents could bring them to United States. The authors caution that the data apply to low-income families and may not be representative of higher SEP Central and South Americans (Suarez-Orozco et al. 2002). In contrast, a study conducted in Canada on groups from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua found few differences between family life in homeland and in resettlement. The authors report that values on the family unit were strong and gender roles were traditionally defined. Glick and Van Hook (2002) discuss that differences in family structure are, "in part, attributable to the recent immigration of many from Central and South America." (72). The important message in these studies is that family structures and practices brought from the country of origin change as immigrants adapt to the new living arrangement and social norms in the United States. The authors

conclude: "Yet there is great variation in the family behavior patterns of Latinos in the United States and it is difficult to conclude that these differences are solely based on cultural preferences from the origin community" (72).

These studies break new ground by underscoring variation in family processes and patterns. Emerging scholarship on Latino families examines family and gender role changes embedded in an understanding of ethnicity/culture as a fluid and dynamic construct and family processes that represent variability by SEP. The emerging scholarly discourse contests prior frameworks that argue that commitment to *familia*, as a culturally bound ideology of rigid patriarchy, maintains low-income Latinos in conditions of inequality. Empirical work on Latino families has consistently demonstrated variability in gender role attitudes and family processes (Baca Zinn 1995; Cofresi, 1999; Toro-Morn 2008).

Emergent Scholarship on Family SEP, Gender Socialization, and Roles

The twenty-first century is witnessing an emerging body of work that is decentering culture as a predictor of Latino family structure and processes and focusing on the role of SEP and social inequality. Emerging scholarship is also contesting family science and sociological paradigms that have not fully incorporated conceptualizations and measurement indicators of the role of racialized systems and the effects of class on social location of families (Newman and Massengill 2006; Burton et al. 2010). In a recent review of a decade of research on qualitative studies conducted on poverty, Katherine Newman and Rebekah Massengill make two important observations that are relevant to Latino family scholarship: (1) the hardship of poverty, its neighborhood effects, and its impact on family formation are not new observations although the economic context has changed; and (2) "disconnects between parenting and marriage hold across race lines and therefore appear to be more of a question of class and poverty than of race and culture" (429). A most compelling observation by the authors that perhaps denotes new theorizing guidance is:

The reintroduction for the language of class has been a hallmark of the past decade, drawing it closer to some of the original concerns of sociologists in the 1940's, contrasted with a nearly universal emphasis on race and ethnicity characteristic of more recent decades (423).

Several studies are presented as illustrative of an emerging lens that centers SEP rather than culture as a critical marker of a family's ability to serve its role of protector, teacher, and advocate for the offspring. As noted by sociologist Annette Lareau (2003), "conceptualizations of the social processes through which families differ are underdeveloped and little is known about

how families transmit advantages to their children" (249). Lareau conducted an in-depth, comparative ethnographic study of African American and White families to assess different child-oriented educational practices. Detailed descriptions of what any observer of family life would readily find include the following: middle-income parents have more economic resources to provide multiple access points to the economic opportunity structure for the development and growth of their children in their specific talents, or in activities such as sports, which will serve them well in accomplishing future goals; Middle-income families who are more educated tend to engage in parenting practices that stress communication, negotiation, and logic and reasoning; and values of assertiveness and competitiveness are associated with high parental education level in all cultures. In general, parents with higher education and marketable skills tend to be more economically and psychologically prepared to engage in early learning activities and skill building with their children and to be actively involved in their child's education across racial/ethnic groups. In contrast, low-income Latino and immigrant parents require skills and knowledge to effectively engage in their child's early learning. Low-income Latino immigrant parents face a lack of access to information, challenges in adjusting to a new environment, and fear of current immigration policy as barriers to their full participation in their child's education (Murguía 2008). Other studies are briefly discussed to illustrate the role of SES (as measured by education level) in family processes and gender role attitudes.

In a study of ethnic differences in family integration among Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Whites, the authors found that social class position matters more than culture. Higher SEP was found to be associated with less proximity to family members, less coresidence, and greater likelihood of financial support. The authors conclude that family integration varies among Latino families and "that familial practices and cultural beliefs should be differentiated to avoid collapsing differences to simply culture" (Sarkisian et al. 2006). These findings are confirmed in a recent study of the Current Population Survey (CPS) pooled data for 2000–2005 to document living arrangements of Latino children ages zero through seventeen among Mexican-, Puerto Rican-, and Cuban-origin children. The authors found that national origin and generational status are associated with different family structures, and within-group differences were observed by family income and parent's education. The data strongly suggest that the structural position of the child's family is of continued importance in academic achievement over time and explains some of the difference across ethnic and generation status groups. These findings are confirmed by Nancy Landale et al. (2006) in the trend analyses of family formation and structure with several indicators of social change. Similar to national patterns, the data show a marked decline in early marriage across Latino subgroups, decreased fertility rates, increase in female householders, and

increased cohabitation. Consistent with differences in their histories and social locations, there are specific differences across and between Hispanic subgroups and Whites (145).

In another study on gender role attitudes, college students' perception of parents' gender role ideologies, values, and behaviors concerning work and family intersections was conducted (Franco et al. 2004). A survey was administered to forty-seven Latina and sixty European American/White females with a mean age of 19.4 at a public university in Northern California. Although Latino family of origin background in terms of education and job status was significantly different from White families, respondents did not differ in terms of the correspondence between gender role ideologies and subsequent behavior. The authors found that Latino and White mothers and fathers largely resembled each other in gender role ideologies, showing "gender differences were not more exaggerated in one group than in the other" (763).

Recent work on socialization practices of Latino families, using interviews with twenty-two Latino faculty and staff at a large Midwestern university who were raised in Spanish-speaking families, examined gender role socialization, differential treatment of girls and boys, and stereotypic feminine behaviors and curtailment of girl's activities (Raffaelli and Ontai 2004). Building on an initial study, a second study was conducted with ninety-seven women and sixty-nine men (median age twenty-one) with almost 50 percent of the participants of Mexican origin. The study measured gender role socialization, differential treatment of girls and boys, parental gender role attitudes, family language use, and background characteristics. Although families expected both girls and boys to contribute to household chores (girls indoors, boys outdoors) and sibling care, boys reported more freedom and more interaction outside the home with members of the opposite sex. Sex-typing is observed whereby girls are expected to be more appropriately feminine and boys masculine. Parents encourage male or female behaviors in the child of their same gender.

However, parents with less traditional gender role attitudes were more likely to speak English at home and with their spouse and to have higher levels of education. Fathers who encouraged their sons to do chores and limited their son's freedom regarding social activities tended to have higher levels of education and to hold more egalitarian gender role attitudes. Similar patterns of results were found for mothers; that is, higher education and use of English were positively associated with more egalitarian gender role attitudes. Of interest, fathers who encouraged *manliness* (masculine gender expression) also encouraged their sons to do chores. Not surprisingly, activity restrictions for girls are associated with traditional and religion-oriented values that are linked with fears of early sexuality. The author concludes that these findings are consistent with those reported in studies of non-Latino families and that "the current body of literature suggests that the process of gender-typing is

similar across different ethnic groups” at similar levels of education (Raffaelli and Ontai 2004, 11).

Another study of 140 Mexican American female and male undergraduates at a midsize Southwestern university measured attitudes toward the role of the female in the workplace and child care responsibility of working parents. Results showed that males and females generally disagreed with traditional attitudes regarding the role of females in the workplace and child care responsibility. Although there was a trend toward more traditional attitudes on the part of males, the differences were minor. The authors conclude: “Our subjects had retained an important part of their heritage by retaining their Spanish language, but their attitude toward the female’s role in the workplace and parental responsibility for child care reflected a more Euro-American orientation” (Gowan and Trevino 1998, 1091).

Norma Cofresi (1999) conducted an in-depth study of the gender role expectations of thirty professional Puerto Rican women with an average age of 38.6 residing in Puerto Rico. The study explored the domains of mothering, marital relationships, sexuality, domestic responsibility, and reputation (or community image). All but one of the participants defined their sex-role ideals in terms of their professional identities and/or in terms of their capacity to combine a professional life with a family life. Three analytic gender role categories emerged from the data: traditional, transitional, and egalitarian. The study concluded the following: traditional patterns of behavior, particularly with respect to mothering coexist alongside more egalitarian attitudes; women expected companionship and cooperation from their mates but were willing to be flexible to preserve their marriages; in their sexuality, they were active and expressive; and women wanted to have a good reputation but also valued their own standards.

Based on this current body of work, I draw two conclusions: Latino family socialization practices and gender role norms and expectations are in transition, and gender role socialization is highly associated with higher education levels in Latino men and women.

Intersectional Perspective on Family Development and Processes

Social science theorizing using an intersectional perspective allows the analyses of the social location of racial/ethnic groups within the larger social, economic, and political context and the exclusionary racial hierarchy (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Burton et al. 2010; Dill and Zambrana 2009; Portes 2000). The illustrative examples included in the previous section provide new ways of thinking to improve our understanding of the variability of Latino family development and processes. These studies have yielded a more in-depth understanding of variations in family processes and gender role socialization by SEP and contest

the generalizability of studies on low-income families. The majority of studies on low-income Mexican-origin families do not represent the rich heterogeneity of family processes within either Mexican-origin groups or other Latino subgroups. Further the majority of studies do not take into account the construct of *colorism* as a stratification variable (Burton et al. 2010). In a 2010 review, Linda Burton and colleagues examine the intersection of race, ethnicity, and colorism (defined as granting privilege to lighter skin vs. darker skin; that is, skin color closest to White) in the scholarly family science literature on racial/ethnic and immigrant families in the last decade. The authors focus on three substantive research areas that have been most frequently studied: inequality and socioeconomic mobility within and across families, interracial romantic pairings, and the racial socialization of children. The authors found that while social scientists have incorporated elements of critical race theory and colorism in family relevant research, there is a need for more attention to these perspectives. They state:

The use of elements equates with some progress, but we argue that in a multicultural society that is shifting in numbers and potentially in the distribution of power, researchers must be mindful of the roles that racialized systems and differentiations based on skin color play in families’ lives. The use of critical race theories and perspectives on colorism in research fosters that mindfulness. (454)

Thus, new critiques of conventional paradigms used in family relevant research and emerging studies disrupt the formulation of Latino families as social problems. These new paradigms contribute to new ways of thinking about Latino families and gender role performance, and in that process emerging scholarly production extends the boundaries of knowledge.

To advance our understanding of U.S. Latino families, research may be improved by operating with critical explicit assumptions that contest conventional explanatory paradigms about inequality and social location. I am proposing the use of an intersectional lens that includes three foundational critical theorizing assumptions:

1. Racial/ethnic characteristics are mutually constituted and are embedded in power relations. *Power-based relations* are defined as “hierarchical, stratified (ranked), centered in power-benefiting and providing options and resources for some by harming and restricting options and resources for others” (Weber 2010, 23). One aspect of power-based relations is to make invisible the structural factors that contribute to restricted resources and options and to uphold a paradigm that attributes success or upward mobility to the myth of an individual’s “pulling themselves up by their bootstraps,” meritocracy, or color-blind society (Bonilla-Silva 2006).

2. History shapes lived experiences that in turn are reflected in dominant-subordinate group relations that shape access to resources and policies and practices that maintain subordination of groups, and hinder social mobility.
3. Gendered and racialized social constructions are made visible and filtered to the American public imagination through primary mechanisms of socialization such as schools, media, and science. The major argument is that the marking of Latinos as a *racialized other* has consequences that limit access to the economic opportunity structure. The consequent power relations and the racialized social constructions of targeted Latino subgroups as poor and culturally stagnant—a negative identity marker—are inserted in social science research, reinforced in public service systems, and centered in the public American imagination by the media.

Figure 3.1 illustrates a set of intersectional relationships that make central the multiplicity of factors associated with low social location of Latinos and shows pathways to understand why negative perceptions of Latinos in the American public imagination persist. The intersectional lens is used to understand why some but not all Latino families have remained disproportionately in low socioeconomic position and why the implicit attributions associated with cultural values, acculturation, and *Latinidad* (an essentialist characterization of the social construction of all Latino groups sharing a common heritage that is based on food and language) shape and reinforce this social location (Caminero-Santangelo, 2007).

In the study of Latinos, intersectionality provides an alternative analytic lens that seeks to inform theorizing around Latino families. The use of this lens provides an opportunity to deconstruct culture in explanatory paradigms as a reason for difference and inequality. In addition, it aims to insert “mindfulness” of factors such as historical incorporation (conquest vs. voluntary immigration) its connection with historical and contemporary policies and laws, and institutionalized practices such as housing segregation to extend understanding of variation in family development by SEP and race among Latino subgroups. The pathways in the paradigm show links among nation/geographic origins or ethnicity, historical mode of incorporation, and political and legal initiatives that have resulted in denial of historic access to basic citizenship rights such as education and voting rights (Johnson 1995). These interconnected factors in turn influence SEP (as measured by low educational attainment and income) and shape the community context in which Latinos live, and impact their knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of options and resources. The resulting material conditions fuel representational negative cultural identity markers that contribute to differential access to the

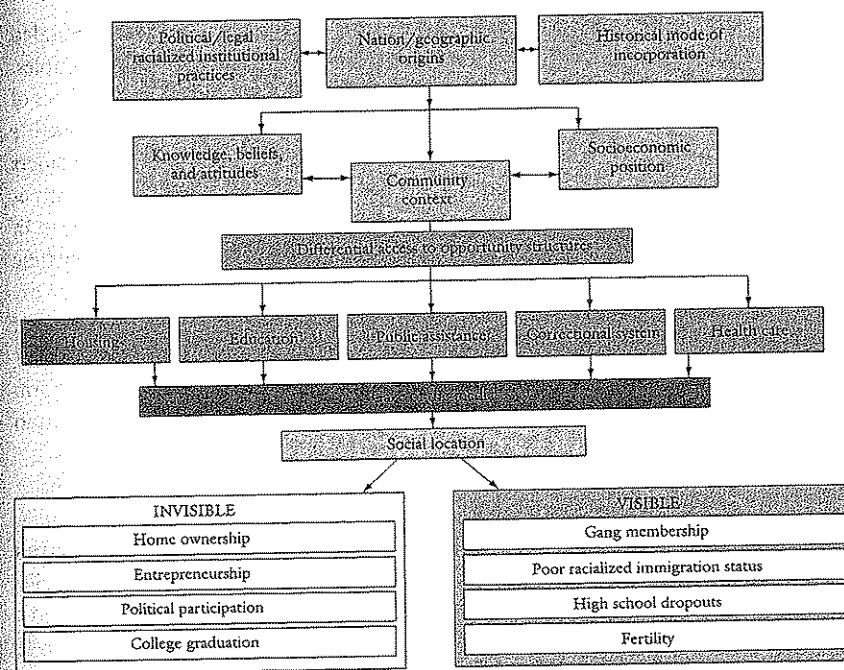


Figure 3.1. Intersectional lens for understanding the patterns of social inequality and social location of Latinos. Source: Modified from Zambrana and Carter-Pokras 2004b.

source and economic opportunity structure and disproportional interaction with public services systems. Media gaze more often than not serves as the basis for racialized public policies and institutionalized practices that reinforce the social location of Latinos, particularly racialized Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans.

This paradigm foregrounds the importance of theorizing knowledge to disrupt conventional cultural cognitive maps or schemata in social science and disciplinary knowledge production and mass media communication channels. To advance new ways of thinking, we must look beyond culture to examine the variation of family processes and structure by SEP, historical incorporation, and race and how these factors contribute to (or hinder) optimal functioning, social integration, and social mobility of U.S. Latino families.

Multiple factors in the twenty-first century, such as demographic changes, educational and professional mobility within and across subgroups, immigration status, and public policy, have significantly altered the social location, family

development, and family processes of Latinos. Studies to date have included predominantly low-income Mexican American and Puerto Rican samples. These studies are assuredly not representative of the U.S.-lived experiences of groups studied or Latino subgroup heterogeneity. Most disciplinary scientists who study culture, race, ethnicity, and society have tended to be outsiders looking in. In the study of Latinos who are perceived as "different," physically, emotionally and socially, an overarching implicit social construction of a culturally, racialized, and gendered group has become embedded over time in the American imagination. Yet, I have demonstrated in this chapter examples of a contemporary and emerging body of scholarship that has initiated important new approaches in the study of Latino families. The new scholarship takes into account SEP and its impact on family development to inform our understanding of family processes and gender role socialization in Latino families.

What emerging research is showing is that higher education (SEP) is a major marker of more egalitarian attitudes and more fluidity in family gender roles, and that the parental transmission of gender role socialization messages varies by SEP. Transmission of these egalitarian gender roles may be enacted differently than in dominant culture families, but what matters is the material conditions (SEP) of the family and how these conditions shape gender role performance, family formation decisions, and family functioning. Thus, what these data explicitly confirm is that culture is not the major predictor of material conditions but that material conditions regardless of culture can positively or negatively impact family processes and structure. To reiterate, the future study of Latino families must include the varying forms of structural inequality to better understand the multiple and varied ways that Latino families enact their roles to negotiate their place in U.S. society.

In the following chapters, I build on this paradigm to discuss more specifically the role of education in Latino children's lives, including parental involvement, academic indicators, and college pathways.

8

Public Service Systems as Sites of the Reproduction of Inequality

It is undeniable that welfare policy is inextricably intertwined with gender and race. However gender and race are necessary, but not sufficient, explanatory elements in an attempt to understand the evolution of welfare policy. . . . [I]t is the overriding need to distinguish between the able-bodied poor and the disabled poor, between the "deserving" and "undeserving poor," be they men or women of any racial and ethnic group, that is the driving force behind welfare policy. It is the able bodied, whatever their ascriptive status that present the moral dilemma to the modern capitalist state because they challenge the legitimacy of its economic and civic order.

—Handler and Hasenfeld 1991, 7

The last two decades have witnessed extensive research and documentation of racial profiling, unequal treatment in health, juvenile, and criminal justice, urban displacement of the poor with little or no replacement of adequate housing, welfare reform with more stringent and inhumane restrictions, and failing schools. Examining data on who uses and interfaces with public service systems and how the poor are treated illuminates what Joel Handler and Yeheskel Hasenfeld (1991) have aptly labeled the "moral construction of poverty." The poverty discourse focuses on the moral justification for why people are poor, services available to assist those in poverty, their treatment in these programs, and the consequences of being poor.

The thinking for this chapter emerged from personal experience, observation, and interdisciplinary study that showed that public service systems serve a similarly socially marked population with a disproportionate, visible number being Black and Latino. Herein, I present a brief historical snapshot of the silent issues and underlying assumptions that drive the debates on public assistance programs and data on who uses or are involved in public service

systems. I also discuss empirical studies on institutional practices of health and human services programs financed by the local, state, and federal government. These programs include public welfare including work-related supports, public housing, child welfare, schools, juvenile justice, and adult correctional systems. The intent is multifold: to provide information that is not easily accessible or meaningful without syntheses and interpretation; to reveal who is most likely to be served in each system through examining the overlap, or what I will term cross-overs, in these public service systems; and to illustrate contemporary instances of unfairness that contribute to discriminatory treatment of non-Hispanic Blacks (NHBs) and Latinos in public service systems. Moreover I seek to dispel myths about the "poor as lazy and unwilling to work" through the use of facts and to unveil how these public systems use disciplinary power—that is, regulation and state authority—to undermine the human capital of the very individuals they were created to help and in effect maintain and reinforce their marginalized social location.¹

Historically, public service systems were designed as a safety net or a form of "public patriarchy" for those individuals, who were temporarily unemployed, disabled, or female widows. These programs have always been a moral dilemma for both the State and the recipients of public assistance. As Handler and Hasenfeld (1991) so eloquently articulate, the normative underpinnings of welfare policy had several moral constructions derived from implicit assumptions that included "work as an individual responsibility" and "many people are poor because they choose a way of life that makes them poor" (10). In other words, the moral definitions of the *deserving poor* included those who worked but for any reason were temporarily unemployed, while the definition of the *undeserving poor* included those who could not work or had limited education and skills and were unable to find work. These definitions served two important social functions: (1) "affirming the values of the dominant society (industrial discipline, two-parent family and individual responsibility and work ethic) by stigmatizing the outcasts" (16) and (2) defining what is deviant, with the poor as the enemy to the existing social order. The distinctive emphasis on individual responsibility precludes historical antecedents of slavery and colonialism, segregation laws, racism, and other structural barriers. Although

1. The fields of social work/social welfare and sociology have a long intellectual history in the study of public assistance programs including child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminology, a subfield of sociology. Handler and Hasenfeld (1991) provide a synthesis of the historical welfare programs from poor houses established in the United States in the English tradition to establishment of welfare policy and its continuous reformations. An incisive history around welfare policy is provided through 1988. Post 1960 an extraordinary amount of study was conducted on the Johnson-era War on Poverty programs and their effectiveness. In this chapter, I provide a glimpse into scholarship that has used an intersectional lens rather than on those scholars who uphold the implicit ideology of the moral construction of poverty.

these antecedents remain silent, they drive the underlying moral construction of poor and racial/ethnic poor as nonnormative or deviant individuals who are undeserving of fair, quality treatment.

Thus the "deserving poor" are those men, generally speaking, who had some connection to the labor force sector but had experienced some event, such as job loss or disability. For women, the deserving poor were those who had been connected to a male worker in the formal labor market sector, such as widows. These latter groups of poor represented the hegemonic understanding of deserving poor under the moral construction of poverty; that is, of individuals or families deserving of public service benefits. Up until the 1960s, the majority of poor, particularly NHB and Latino (Mexican American and Puerto Rican), had been restricted from access to both education and high-paying labor market sectors due to segregation and discriminatory policies and laws. These racial/ethnic groups represented the poorest groups in the United States and those most in need of public assistance. A major debate given impetus by the civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s was whether individuals who are unable to work for physical or mental health reasons or lack of skills to obtain a suitable job were entitled to public cash assistance and supplementary benefits to acquire the skills necessary to secure a job. The push was to expand the 1935 Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to the poor including health benefits; namely, Medicaid. Although legislation was passed as part of the Johnson-era War on Poverty programs, resistance and criticism have continued to characterize the implementation of public assistance programs. Handler and Hasenfeld (1991) describe the public assistance program as "A program mired in controversy and moral ambiguity. The social security widow is treated with respect and dignity. The AFDC...woman is more often than not treated with suspicion and contempt" (1).

The debates on deserving and undeserving poor implicitly center the core issue of rights that has plagued U.S. policy since its creation as a nation. The debates dismiss structural inequality and how poverty, race, gender, and ethnicity intersect and shape the power relations between poor and nonpoor, non-Hispanic White (NHW) and racial/ethnic underrepresented minorities. The harshness of the policy debates continue unabated regarding distinctions between the deserving and undeserving poor, with the *undeserving poor* increasingly representing the face of Black and Latino families. There are two cooccurring silent or implicit assumptions in contemporary debates that shape how programs are designed and delivered. First, the notion that poverty is a behavioral problem among the poor that can be fixed by instilling "proper American values" and by women "being proper wives and mothers" (as reflected, e.g., in the abstinence and healthy marriage initiatives in early 2000). The second implicit assumption is that in our democracy all willing workers should be able to get a job and those who don't work or are unable to find a

job do not deserve dignified treatment.² Even though the Social Security Act of 1935 clearly states that being treated with equity is a right, Daniel Moynihan (1995) argued that welfare (public assistance) is not a right but instead “a commitment by the Federal Government to match state spending on programs that states devise” (184).

The implementation of state policy is the social location where differential and unequal treatment of Blacks and Latinos is most evident. The moral foundation of these programs is reflected in two ways: by the amount and quality of resources that states allocate to programs, and by the ways in which official state representatives such as caseworkers and probation officers implement program benefits and use disciplinary power (e.g., barriers to services, personal treatment of clients) to ensure that recipients are aware of their ascribed status. These differences in state allocation of resources and how agency officials and caseworkers implement the program is often overlooked in the study of these systems (see, e.g., Reich 2005; Watkins-Hayes 2009). What is well-known is the disheartening paradox between the goals of the program to instill industrial discipline, work ethic, and self-sufficiency and the meager resources allocated for these goals with the power of individual states to design adequate or inadequate programs with limited federal regulation and oversight. As a result of lack of federal monitoring, states policies vary widely in the level of benefits provided, and many instances of biased and unfair implementation have been recorded; for example, in the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), schools, juvenile and criminal justice, and public assistance programs (see, e.g., Bender 2003; American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU] 2007; Jones-DeWeever et al. 2009).

Overall, public assistance programs serve a small group of the poor and exclude many who need assistance. States determine how much individuals and families get in economic assistance, which varies by race, ethnicity, and gender, and is often inadequate to promote self-sufficiency. Increased study of these programs reveals that rather than helping poor families, they curtail citizenship rights; are morally degrading, intrusive, and humiliating; segregate and stigmatize groups of individuals as deviants; treat men more harshly and in more mean-spirited ways; and subject recipients to frequent administrative regulations. “At the same time, these institutional practices send a message to the poor who are not on welfare, by signifying the types of ceremonies they are likely to be subjected to if they do apply for welfare” (Handler and

Hasenfeld 1991, 12). As a result, the many reforms of these programs have contributed little to their transformation from their original punitive design, and research has been more likely to focus on people failures than system failures.

Social scientists in past decades in their study of poor racial/ethnic populations initiated a scientific legacy that perpetuated a view of public welfare programs, particularly AFDC, as creating a “welfare culture” or a “culture of dependency and irresponsibility,” which they claimed failed to hold people accountable that is to provide for themselves economically. Handler and Hasenfeld (1991) poignantly address the use of these social science theories in policy making. They state: “Justifying or debunking welfare policy on moral grounds while using social science research and theory to buttress the moral argument is the key attribute of moralistic theories” (7–8). The outcome of much of this research with some important exceptions reinforces prior historical representations of poor and Black and Latino peoples as deviant, an “underclass,” and undeserving of assistance. Social scientists represent both sides of the debate. For example, some scholars discuss the failures of public assistance programs, while others denounce the differential treatment, discrimination, and unfairness of the system. Those studies that are most consistent with dominant hegemonic thinking are lauded as credible, while those studies that challenge hegemonic thinking are often ignored. The potential power of a unified scholarly political voice is hindered by the fact that critical discourses are often located in different disciplines. Thus intellectual silos are created, which fail to disrupt the institutional practices and policies that are engaged in the reproduction of inequality.

Although we have historically focused on public assistance as a site of inequality, it can be argued that all public systems (e.g., juvenile justice, child welfare) have a basic value system and “myths and ceremonies” that promote minimal subsistence service, deny basic civil rights, and often falter in common sense and basic decency in dealing with all poor but especially Blacks and Latinos.

Profile: Who Are the Poor?

The poor are defined in the United States by a median income for individuals or a family household income, which is highly associated with years of education completed and participation in the labor force. The poverty thresholds and poverty guidelines differ in terms of what they are used for, who determines them, and how they are calculated. For example, in 2008, the federal poverty threshold was \$10,997 for one person and \$22,017 for a family of four (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008). The poverty guidelines set

2. For excellent histories of failed public policies for the poor, see Sealander 2003; Miller and Roby 1970. France Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward’s pivotal works, *Poor People Movement: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (1977), *The New Class War* (1982), *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (1993), and numerous others challenged the investments in the war on poverty that failed to change structural conditions.

forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) in 2009 was \$10,830 for one person and \$22,050 for a family of four (\$424.00 a week).³

Table 8.1 displays economic indicators of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population sixteen years of age or older by race and ethnicity. Median household income is lowest among Blacks and Latinos and highest for Asians with a median household income of \$57,518. The highest rates of labor force participation are among Whites, Latinos, and Asians, while Blacks have the lowest employment rates and the highest unemployment rates. Among Blacks and Latinos, 11 percent have been in the workforce for twenty-seven weeks or more but still live below the poverty level, and for those with a high school diploma or less over one-third (36 percent) of Blacks and about one-quarter (26 percent) of Latinos live below the poverty level compared to 19 percent of Whites' and 15 percent of Asians. Blacks and Latinos are almost three times more likely to be poor than Whites and 2.5 times more likely to be poor than Asians. Black (33 percent) and Latino (27 percent) children have exceptionally high poverty rates compared to White and Asian children. Interestingly, overall all groups have close to or over a 60 percent employment rate, yet Blacks and Latinos with a high school diploma are more likely to be unemployed than Whites and are much more likely to live below poverty level compared to Whites and Asians. These data confirm that given similar levels of education, Whites and Asians receive more median earnings (see chapter 2), and Blacks and Latinos have less access to those higher-paying jobs, which places them at risk for higher unemployment and poverty. Those most in need of government public support services are Black and Latino families who are disproportionately poor. Further, poor Blacks and Latinos who are more likely to have a main economic provider who works in low-paying unskilled labor or seasonal jobs or who has sporadic employment are also more likely not to have health insurance. Families who require economic assistance due to inability to find work require access to public assistance to maintain the economic and social well-being of their families.

3. There are two basic versions of the federal poverty measure: the poverty thresholds (which are the primary version) and the poverty guidelines. The Census Bureau issues the poverty thresholds, which are generally used for statistical purposes—for example, to estimate the number of people in poverty nationwide each year and classify them by type of residence, race, and other social, economic, and demographic characteristics. The Department of Health and Human Services issues the poverty guidelines for administrative purposes—for instance, to determine whether a person or family is eligible for assistance through various federal programs. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/faq.shtml#differences>.

Table 8.1. Income, Employment, and Poverty Indicators by Race and Ethnicity

	Total	White	Black	Latino	Asian
U.S. population, 2006 (millions)	299,399 (100%)	221,335 (74%)	37,051 (12%)	44,252 (15%)	13,101 (4%)
Individuals below poverty line, 2006 (%)	12	8	24	21	10
Children below poverty line, 2006 (%)	17	14	33	27	12
Median household income (\$)	46,326	48,977	30,134	34,241	57,518
Median personal income (\$)	32,140	32,919	27,110	23,613	36,152
Civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older, 2007 (millions)	233,156	188,657	27,603	31,554	10,625
Employment-population ratio, 2007 (%)	63	66	58	64	64
Unemployment rate (16 years and older) (%)	5	4	9	6	4
Not in labor force (16 years and older) (%)	34	34	37	33	31
People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, below poverty level, 2004 (%)	6	5	11	11	4
People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, below poverty level with high school diploma or less, 2004 (%)	22	19	36	26	15

Sources: Adapted from U.S. Department of Labor 2006; U.S. Census Bureau 2008.

Government Public Assistance Programs

In 1935, in the wake of the Great Depression when all U.S. citizens were exposed to the risks of poverty, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was the landmark public welfare program that initiated the provision of economic and social resources and assistance to families in need. *Public assistance*, best known as *welfare*, is commonly defined as *government benefits distributed to impoverished persons to enable them to maintain a minimum standard of well-being*. The public assistance infrastructure provides economic, housing, food stamps, and health benefits to poor citizens in order to assure a minimum standard of well-being. During its first twenty-five years, AFDC caseloads were predominantly White widows and, in the late 1950s and 1960s, increasing numbers of NHBs and Latinos. As the "color" of the public service programs changed, so did the scrutiny of those who applied.

The public welfare system underwent a major reform under the Clinton administration, from Aid to Families with Dependent Children to Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. The welfare reform was powerfully influenced again by social pressure and criticism from individuals and groups who perceived the system as responding to and serving deviant, nonworking but capable individuals. In 1994, former President Clinton addressed the concern of the "welfare culture" and proposed that to change the system it must begin with responsibility, implying government and personal responsibility: "We can strengthen our communities if we can give every person on welfare the dignity, the pride, the direction, the

strength, and sheer person power" (Clinton 1994, 24). PRWORA included government policies designed to help working and low-income families become economically self-sufficient. Programmatic components included the earned income tax credit (EITC), health insurance such as Medicaid and SCHIP, food assistance through food stamps and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program (access to prenatal care and child health for mothers and children), child care subsidies, work support benefits, and public housing vouchers. Work support benefits were included to decrease the probability that when welfare participants transitioned from welfare to work, their jobs would not leave them earning below or near the poverty line (Daponte et al. 1999; Marchevsky and Theoharis 2006; Urban Institute 2006a, b). Although former president Clinton's rhetoric focused on family strengthening and supports, the design of the program with a five-year restriction to reenvision your life, develop new skills, increase your education, and find a job above the poverty level reflected a reconstruction and reinforcement of the moral arguments of the undeserving poor. PROWRA, however, paid little attention to the effects of accumulated economic and social disadvantage over the life course and its impact on family structure and processes. Much disappointment was expressed in the shortcomings of this regressive reform, which mandated change in strengthening communities but did not require structural change and investment of significant government resources to remedy the lives of marginalized populations.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Temporary Assistance for Needy families (TANF) was created under PRWORA and replaced the AFDC, Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS), and the Emergency Assistance (EA) programs (USDHHS 2006a, b, c). The purposes of TANF are to provide financial assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes (to avoid children becoming wards of the state); reduce the long-term dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation and work opportunities; and promote and maintain two-parent families (USDHHS 2006c). Federal funds are provided to states as a block grant that allows States to implement their own TANF programs and develop state-determined needs standards (Currie 2006; USDHHS 2006b).

TANF has specific federal work requirements to receive cash assistance, including at least thirty hours of work a week for single parents and thirty-five to fifty-five hours a week for two-parent families. Failure to participate in work requirements can result in a reduction or termination of benefits. TANF also includes a five-year limit for receipt of cash benefits; an optional state-determined family cap, which denies benefits to children born to welfare recipients once in the program; limited child care stipends for those participating in work

programs; and provisions that deny most forms of public assistance to legal immigrants for five years or until they attain citizenship (USDHHS 1996, 2006c). Most recipients of TANF are eligible for Medicaid, which provides access to health care, hospital care, and prescription drugs (Kaiser Commission 2007). In 2005, the Deficit Reduction Act was passed, which requires states to engage more TANF cases in productive work activities that lead to self-sufficiency and the reduction of the TANF caseloads (USDHHS 2006b).

Table 8.2 presents data by race and ethnicity of recipients of public benefits. During the 2006 fiscal year, there were close to two million families and two million recipients of TANF benefits, of which approximately three million were children. Thus, one million adults out of the total U.S. population received public assistance. Blacks made up about 36 percent of all TANF recipients, followed by Whites (33 percent) and Latinos (26 percent) (USDHHS 2006c). Another component of public assistance is the food stamp program, which aims to help alleviate hunger and malnutrition (otherwise referred to as food insecurity) by providing coupons and electronic benefits that can be used to purchase food at grocery stores. To be eligible, households must have a net monthly income below the poverty line; 41 percent of all food stamp recipients lived in a household with earnings below the poverty line (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2007). More than 55 percent of food stamp recipients are children or the elderly (over the age of sixty). Approximately 35 million participants are estimated to be eligible to receive food stamps and approximately 25 million receive this benefit, a take-up rate of about 70 percent, which is considered successful according to the federal government. These benefits are considered to be "well targeted to intended beneficiaries" with an identified need to improve the knowledge about and the use of nutritional food options among its recipients (U.S. Office of Management and Budget and Federal Agencies 2003). However, this also means that 10 million people or more may be experiencing food insecurity; that is, they do not have enough to eat on a daily basis.

In 2006, the participation rate for those who received food stamps was inconsistent with the eligibility rate. For example, only 8 percent or approximately twenty-three million Whites would qualify for food stamps based on income, but they constitute 43 percent of the recipient pool, placing their take-up rate at about 46 percent (about eleven million Whites received these benefits in 2006) (USDA 2007). Therefore 46 percent of all eligible Whites, based on income, receive food stamps compared with 11 percent of eligible Blacks and 8 percent of eligible Latinos (USDA 2007). Although Whites have the highest median income compared to Blacks and Latinos, Whites access the highest percentage of benefits in food stamps, unemployment insurance, Medicaid, and EITC. Blacks, who have the lowest median personal income, are much less likely to use food stamps, unemployment insurance, and Medicaid

Table 8.2. Recipients of Public Benefits by Race and Ethnicity

	Total	White	Black	Latino	Asian
Families receiving TANF, 2006	1,802,567 (100%)	33%	36%	26%	2%
Food stamp receipt, households, 2006	11,315,000 (100%)	46%	31%	13%	2%
Food stamp receipt, participants, 2006	25,595 (100%)	43%	33%	19%	2%
Households with elderly individuals	2,024,000	50%	24%	18%	7%
Child care subsidies (children 0–6 years not in kindergarten and below poverty line), 2005	15%	17%	24%	5%	N/A
Unemployment insurant, 2007 (average weekly claim total)	2,532.9	58%	18%	16%	2%
Medicaid recipient, 2003	52,000,000 (100%)	41%	22%	19%	3%
EITC, 2005, Full Credit Eligibility	100%	60%	15%	18%	N/A
Tax Analyst, 2005					
Average credit	\$679	\$721	\$564	\$638	N/A
Percent with less than full credit because earnings too low	30%	18%	50%	46%	N/A

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture 2007; U.S. Department of Labor 2006; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008.

but are more likely to use child care subsidies. Latinos have similar patterns to Blacks in use of public welfare services, but are less likely to use child care subsidies. The higher use of public services by Whites may be associated with their ability to better negotiate the system, experiencing less discrimination based on race and ethnic group membership, and/or may highlight the significant yet invisible poor Whites that are not acknowledged in national data systems (see Henderson and Tickamyer 2009).

Although Latinos are the least likely to use food stamps and public health insurance coverage, they are also at the highest risk of food insecurity and lack of access to health care services. In a study of low-income children at a pediatric clinic, Margaret Kersey and colleagues (2007) found that U.S.-born Latino children who have at least one Mexican-born parent are at especially high risk for hunger and household food insecurity (6.8 percent) compared to nonimmigrant, non-Latino children (0.5 percent). Another study found an upward trend during 1983 to 2003 in no health insurance coverage among U.S.-born Hispanics, driven by a decrease in private coverage with no increase in public coverage (Rutledge and McLaughlin 2008). Available public health insurance coverage programs, such as Medicaid and SCHIP, are not effectively reaching uninsured Latino children (Flores et al. 2002). Among Latino women, a study explored the impact on the use of prenatal care following the enactment of PRWORA in three states: New York, California, and Florida. Although Florida was the only state to restrict eligibility, women in all immigrant subgroups

were two to four times more likely to have inadequate prenatal care than U.S.-born citizens in New York (Fuentes-Afflick et al. 2006).

Access barriers to most public services and low participation rates are not new. What is new is the research and discourse that highlights unequal access to services. Factors that contribute to the low participation rates for racial/ethnic minorities include lack of knowledge about the programs and eligibility requirements and perceived and real difficulties concerning completing the application process (such as language barriers, literacy levels, time commitments, fear of deportation, and differential treatment by public service workers). Although studies on participation suggest that stigma may contribute to lower participation, other studies have found that few people expressed that they did not want to be associated with the program due to stigma or not needing the services (Daponte et al. 1999; Marchevsky and Theoharis 2006; Urban Institute 2006a).

Goals of Public Assistance and Unequal Treatment

The goals of TANF are to move welfare recipients from welfare to work to increase family economic self-sufficiency and to decrease state welfare caseloads—a task for which states are held accountable for and receive incentives from the federal government (USDHHS 1996). The unprecedented and rapid decrease in welfare rolls in many states post 1996 sparked attention and inquiry. State reports and data from the National Survey of American Families indeed showed evidence of discrimination and mistreatment based on race and ethnicity (Jones-DeWeever et al. 2009; Marchevsky and Theoharis 2006; Urban Institute 2002a; Zedlewski 2003). While welfare and TANF caseloads have decreased, Black (41 percent) and Latino (51 percent) women continue to be more likely to remain on welfare than White (27 percent) women for longer periods of time (up to sixty months) and are more likely to be negatively affected by time limits. Kristen Harknett (2001) analyzed differences in welfare and labor market participation among White, African American and Hispanic welfare recipients in Riverside, California. The author found that in the absence of welfare-to-work interventions, African Americans and Hispanics worked as much or more than Whites but were less likely to leave welfare. Two factors may account for this disparity: lower marriage and cohabitation rates among African American and Hispanic welfare recipients and less financial assistance from social networks and paternal child support.

Female-headed households are the largest percentage of households receiving TANF benefits and are likely to experience the most racial/ethnic and gender discrimination within the welfare system (Urban Institute 2002a). Two examples illustrate instances of discrimination: Latino and Black women are more likely than NHW women to be asked sexually invasive questions and to

experience sexual harassment at their assigned work activities. For example, one study found that 41 percent of all women reported being asked questions such as their sexual orientation, their relationship with their children's fathers, if they were sexually active, and if they were taking birth control (Gordon 2001). Alejandra Marchevsky and Jean Theoharis (2006) studied Latino and immigrant women and reported that participants were often denied, dropped, or had their benefits reduced but were unsure of the reason for the decision. Caseworkers would often make inappropriate and racially charged comments to participants.

For example, "After discovering that her family's food stamps had been terminated, [Delia] called the welfare office several times and finally spoke to a caseworker who offered to reinstate a monthly food stamp allotment of \$68 (she previously had received \$260). As Delia recounted she asked, 'Why \$68?' and explained to the caseworker that her family needed to eat. You people always are asking for help when you don't need it, you should be happy with what you have or go back to Mexico, Delia backed off, fearful that the caseworker would take away even the \$68 in food stamps she had first offered" (164).

The work requirement of TANF is another area where discriminatory practices are observed. Adults receiving TANF report barriers that significantly reduce work activities: almost 45 percent had at least one barrier to work, and 14 percent had two or more barriers to work. These barriers include poor mental or physical health (35 percent), having less than a high school diploma (42 percent), a three or more year gap in employment (30 percent), having a child under the age of one (19 percent), and requiring an interview in Spanish (10 percent) (Zedlewski and Holland 2003; Urban Institute 2002a). Other circumstances that make it difficult for recipients to work include severe mental distress as a consequence of domestic partner violence, inadequate child care, lack of transportation, and the lack of availability of jobs and training programs (Jones-De Weever et al. 2009; Savner 2000; Marchevsky and Theoharis 2006).

In general the public assistance system has proved to be an unfriendly and unfair environment for eligible racial/ethnic minorities, poor individuals, and families. What has been documented in the last decade is that Blacks and Latinos are not given access to resources that provide a solid foundation for economic self-sufficiency and family well-being. Disparities exist in access to and receipt of services across racial and ethnic lines, especially in areas where caseworkers are given the discretion in the services they offer recipients. In one study of interactions between welfare recipients and caseworkers, Whites (59 percent) were more likely than Blacks (36 percent) to state their caseworkers were helpful in providing information about potential jobs. Further, while 41 percent of Whites indicated that they were encouraged to go back to school and continue their education, no Blacks reported the same (Savner 2000). The

National Urban League (2002) found that the type of work option available to recipients varied by ethnicity and race, with 72 percent of Latinas and 65 percent of Black women working at unpaid jobs to receive welfare benefits, while only 46 percent of White women were working at unpaid jobs in exchange for benefits (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights [USCCR] 2002). As a result, White women are more likely than Blacks and Latinas to leave public assistance with employment that may help them transition to economic self-sufficiency.

Overall NHWs (25 percent) are more likely to leave public assistance with paid employment, compared to NHBs (17 percent) and Latinos (9 percent). This disparity cannot be attributed to the culture or work ethic of racial/ethnic minorities but rather to employer preferences (Holzer and Stoll 2003). Employers are less likely to hire Black and Hispanic welfare recipients, even when they have more education than White welfare recipients, and among temporary employment agencies there was "extensive evidence of racial discrimination in hiring for entry-level jobs" (USCCR 2002, 2). Furthermore, NHW women (48 percent) were more likely to receive the necessary subsidies (child care, transportation assistance) to transition to work and increase their level of education, while less than 30 percent of both Latino and NHB women received such subsidies (National Urban League 2002).

For the small number of language minority eligible families, language continues to be a barrier while trying to navigate the welfare system. Nationally, over 50 percent of survey respondents reported they needed translation services but none were available, even though federal regulations required "welfare agencies to provide interpretation when a significant portion of the client base speaks a language other than English" (Gordon 2001, 35). In New York City, where the majority of the TANF recipients are Latino (36 percent), that percent was significantly higher, with 70 percent of respondents indicating they needed translation but none was made available to them. Among TANF recipients, whose first language was a language other than English, 62 percent reported experiencing significant language barriers while seeking welfare services, completing the application process, and trying to obtain employment opportunities. In fact, many Spanish-speaking welfare recipients were denied access to English language-learning classes because space was not available, and to job training courses, including vocational training and resume-writing classes, due to a lack of accommodations for students who were not English speakers (National Urban League 2002).

National data show that more TANF families' cases were closed due to failure to comply (20 percent) than employment (18 percent), which suggest that decreasing caseloads do not necessarily represent entry into labor force or economic self-sufficiency (USDHHS 2006c). Further, a multistate study of welfare recipients that transitioned out of the TANF program found severe discrepancies coinciding with race for the reasons the recipients left welfare.

In a study conducted across three states from 1997 to 1999, 54 percent of racial/ethnic minority cases were closed due to failure to comply compared with 39 percent of NHW cases. In a similar study conducted in Florida, 8 percent of Whites had their cases closed due to compliance issues compared with 22 percent of Blacks (Savner 2000). The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP 2002) found that recipients receiving sanctions resulting in a reduction or discontinuance of benefits were more likely to suffer from incidences of domestic violence, had greater barriers to employment such as disabilities or limited education, and were more likely to experience multiple barriers.

Discriminatory institutional public assistance state practices and policies impede NHBs' and Latinos' access to resources that could increase their skills and economic sustainability of families. These practices are detrimental to the lives of the people intended to be served and are compounded by racism in the larger society, particularly work sites. As observed by Holzer and Stoll (2003), the conditional demand for NHB and Hispanic welfare recipients lags behind their representation in the welfare population and seems affected by employer preferences and location suggesting "minority welfare recipients face more serious employment barriers than their NHW counterparts" (219). Although Robert Preuhs (2007) tries to make a case for increased Latino representation and legislative incorporation as a means to influence social welfare policy, the author acknowledges that scholars continue to find evidence of racial backlash in public policy decisions. We can conclude that public welfare programs are not making the human capital investments required to ensure that racial/ethnic minorities and low-income NHWs can lift themselves out of poverty. Access to quality housing and community resources plays an important role in buttressing or diminishing one's life options and the quality of family life. Without access to safe neighborhoods and quality educational and recreational resources, the social location of the poor remains relatively unchanged.

Housing, Community, and Neighborhood

Housing is the largest expense of the typical American household, and housing conditions are often reflective of other financial and educational opportunities (Bowdler 2004). Residential location and the quality of housing have a significant impact on the lives of individuals and families. Specifically, what are the characteristics of the neighborhood in which low-income and poor families are able to live when using public assistance programs? Limited government assistance is available to help low-income families and individuals with the cost of housing. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers financial support for free or limited cost public housing for low-income residents and includes a mandatory community service requirement by the tenants. These supports are provided through Section 8 certificates and

Table 8.3. Characteristics of Public Housing Residents by Type of Housing and Race and Ethnicity

Characteristic	Section 236	Section 8	Public housing
Number of subsidized units	440,329	1,817,360	1,282,099
Average monthly tenant rent (\$)	254	226	202
Average household income (\$)	11,200	10,600	10,000
Female-headed households (%)	76	84	77
White (%)	45	39	31
Black (%)	37	41	46
Latino (%)	13	16	20
Asian (%)	4	3	2

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1997, 2008a.

vouchers and through Section 236, which subsidizes the interest payments on mortgages for rental or cooperative housing owned by private, nonprofit, or limited profit landlords and rented to low-income tenants (HUD 2004).

Latinos are less likely than Whites and Blacks to receive any housing benefits and are proportionately less likely when accounting for poverty level and average housing costs to access these benefits. Racial/ethnic minorities who receive governmental funding for public housing are more likely than Whites and Asians to live in a neighborhood that is economically disadvantaged.

Table 8.3 presents data on HUD-supported subsidies by family structure (single-parent households), income, and racial and ethnic characteristics of residents (HUD 1997; 2008a, b, c). Noteworthy, over 75 percent of all residents are female-headed householders. Whites and Asians are more likely to have Section 236 vouchers, and Blacks and Latinos are more likely to live in public housing. Those with incomes of \$10,000 or less were the most likely to reside in public housing and to have the lowest rental payments.

The location of different housing options makes a marked difference in access to a social and economic opportunity structure. The average poverty rate for the neighborhoods in which public housing is located was 37 percent higher than the averages for both Section 8 and Section 236 (20 percent). Further, Section 8 (40 percent) and Section 236 (33 percent) recipients were more likely to live in neighborhoods with higher single-family detached homeowners than recipients of public housing (26 percent) (HUD 1997). Latinos and NHBs are the least likely to live in "neighborhoods of opportunity," which are determined by the neighborhood's availability of sustainable employment, healthy environments, access to high-quality health care, adequate transportation, high-quality child care, and high-performing schools. Dolores Acevedo-Garcia and colleagues (2008) propose that NHB and Latino children typically live in a neighborhood environment that is much more disadvantaged than the neighborhood environment of the average NHW child. Using the 2000

Census data from the one hundred metropolitan areas with the largest child population, the authors show that a typical Latino child lived in a neighborhood with a poverty rate of 19 percent and unemployment rate of 9 percent, and where 35 percent of the adults did not have a high school diploma. The data for a typical Latino child living below the federal poverty line shows a much bleaker profile: Children are living in a neighborhood with a poverty rate of about 26 percent, unemployment rate of about 11 percent, and where more than 42 percent of the adults in the neighborhood lack a high school diploma.

In one study of neighborhood effects (see chapter 5 for a description of neighborhood effects), Jeffrey Timberlake (2007) estimated racial and ethnic inequality in the amount of time children can expect to live in poor and non-poor neighborhoods throughout childhood. Using the 1990s as a benchmark, the average NHB child can expect to spend 50 percent of his/her first eighteen years in neighborhoods with poverty in excess of 20 percent versus 40 percent for Latino and 5 percent for NHW children.

Neighborhoods are an important context to understand the intersection of economic opportunity structure, poverty, and race/ethnicity. Of the twenty cities with the highest Hispanic population, only four have rents and owner costs lower than the national average (Bowdler 2004). Almost 70 percent of Hispanics are concentrated in five states; two of them are California and New York, which are among the top five least affordable states to live. Nationally about 26 percent of a household's income is spent on rent, with NHBs (28 percent) and Latinos (27 percent) spending more of their income on rent than NHWs (25 percent) and living in less desirable neighborhoods (U.S. Census 2004c). Hispanics were more likely in 2000 than in 1989 to be quoted a higher rent than their NHW counterpart for the same unit (Urban Institute 2002b). In 2003, Hispanics were overrepresented as home renters and in categories of negative housing indicators (e.g., housing hazards, crime, vandalism, exposure to toxins) and are disproportionately exposed to worse living conditions than the population as a whole (U.S. Census 2004c). Latinos live in residential spaces that are smaller and more crowded than the overall population, and they are disproportionately represented among those who live in older, deteriorated housing with severe physical problems, leading to higher exposure to environmental triggers of asthma, lead paint, and asbestos (U.S. Census 2004c; Carter-Pokras et al. 2007).

Institutional practices in the housing market show that the greatest share of discrimination for Latino and NHB home seekers is omission of information such as being told units are unavailable or being shown and told about fewer units than a comparable nonminority home seeker. Hispanics are more likely than NHWs and NHBs to be discriminated against in their quest for housing (HUD 2006). Consistent patterns of housing discrimination show

that (1) NHW applicants were consistently favored over Hispanics more than 25 percent of the time in relation to requests for additional information and inspection of available housing units, and (2) Hispanics experienced adverse treatment compared to equally qualified NHWs 50 percent of the time when they visited real estate or rental offices to inquire about the availability of housing advertised in major metropolitan newspapers (Urban Institute 2002b).

Inequality in access to quality housing and residence in hypersegregated communities with limited education, employment, and recreational resources, perpetuate chronic stress due to a lack of food, money, and crowded spaces. Access to housing is linked to the health and well-being of individuals and families. When a market lacks a sufficient supply of affordable housing, lower income racial/ethnic families are often forced to limit expenditures for food, medical care, and other necessities in order to pay rent (Anderson et al. 2003).

These factors contribute to child neglect and intervention by child protective services (CPS, a public agency that investigates child abuse and neglect cases). These structural processes of inequality, such as inadequate public assistance and poor housing options, maintain the marginalization of low-income NHBs and Latinos outside the economic opportunity structure and are disruptive to healthy family functioning and processes. Moreover, many of the poor who reside in public housing often become the targets of racialized institutional practices due to implicit moral social constructions of the poor by public systems bureaucratic guardians as "morally unfit and deviant" and inadequate parents.

Child Welfare System

Child welfare refers to the physical, mental, and social well-being of a child and is highly associated with family SES and community resources.⁴ Multiple

4. Child abuse and neglect is broadly defined as "the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby" (Giovannoni and Becerra 1979, 12). The majority of child welfare cases fall under the category of neglect, that is, children who may not have enough to eat, may not have adequate clothing, or may be left home alone with older siblings due to parents having to work. The breakdown of substantiated child abuses cases in 2000 was 63 percent for neglect, 19 percent for physical abuse, 10 percent for sexual abuse, and 8 percent for psychological abuse. The rates of child abuse vary by race and ethnicity with NHWs at 51 percent, African Americans at 25 percent, Hispanics at 15 percent, American Indians/Alaskan Natives at 2 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islanders at 1 percent (US Department of Health and Human Services 2000). In 2008, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System reported that 73.2 percent of victims of child abuse suffered neglect including medical neglect (2.2%), while 16 percent were victims of physical abuse, an estimated 9 percent experienced sexual abuse and 7.3 percent were emotionally or psychologically maltreated (<http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/statistics/index.cfm>). These national rates may be different by state and region. The policies and laws applied in

factors are associated with child maltreatment, such as poverty, inadequate parenting skills including physical and mental health conditions, substance use, and chronic family stressors. Racial/ethnic minority children compared to NHW children are more likely to receive more intensive and punitive services, are more likely to be reported more often, and are more likely to remain in CPS for longer periods of time (Church 2006; Harden 2008). Unlike higher-income families, poor families are more likely to be involved with public service systems, and therefore they are more likely to be under scrutiny and have their cases reported to CPS (Children's Defense Fund [CDF] 2005).

The number of Latino children entering the child welfare system increased during the last decade. Children who live in poverty are the most likely to interface with the child welfare protective services system. African American and Latino children have historically been disproportionately overrepresented in the child welfare system and experienced unequal treatment (Sealand 2003; Zambrana and Capello 2003; Harden 2008). Though poverty is not the sole cause for child abuse and neglect, children who live in families with annual incomes of less than \$15,000 are twenty-two times more likely to be abused or neglected than children living in families with annual incomes of \$30,000 or more (CDF 2005, 115). A large percentage of families involved with the child welfare system are Black and Hispanic. In 2005, Hispanics made up 17 percent of the children in foster care nationally and 40 percent of the children in foster care in California (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2006; Douglas-Hall et al. 2006).

Poverty and chronic economic stress are associated with barriers to parents fulfilling their normative parenting responsibilities including the provision of food, clothing, health care, and paying bills. Latino parents frequently face multiple barriers in accessing and effectively using public social services, such as fear of removal of their child from the home; social services that are inaccessible or of low quality; insufficient bilingual personnel and inappropriately

each state vary and are differentially applied by the Child Protective Service (CPS) agencies designated to implement investigations. This inconsistent application of guidelines is associated with qualifications and potential biases of caseworkers and the unclear guidelines provided under CPS guidelines. As noted by Giovanni and Becerra (1979) and other scholars (Reich 2005; Zambrana and Dorrington 1998; Zambrana and Capello 2003), the vague statutory definitions that have historically characterized the definition of child abuse and neglect would not pose serious problems if there were clear-cut criteria and standards for interpreting them available to those who must make judgments about specific cases. There is substantial evidence that such criteria do not exist. "Whether from the standpoint of statutory definitions or from professional guidelines such as those above, the burden of interpretation ultimately falls on the various professionals, who must make decisions about whether individual cases belong under the broader rubrics of neglect and abuse" (Giovannoni and Becerra 1979, 10–11). This role of interpretation by caseworkers, many of whom are not trained or licensed in the field of child welfare, has left poor and racial/ethnic families and children in particular in unpredictable and disruptive circumstances.

written informational materials; inadequate family support; and social services that lack cultural competence (Ortega et al. 1996). Children placed in foster care frequently have behavioral and physical disorders (Santiago 1995). One study found that 84 percent of children adopted in New York in 1992 to 1993 and 95 percent of children adopted in California in 1993 to 1994 had one or more physical or emotional problems (Simms et al. 1999). Families who interface with the child welfare system often experience other difficulties such as substance abuse, mental health problems, children with special needs, and domestic violence. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) notes that "poverty, domestic violence, and involvement in the child welfare system are often inextricably linked" (2005, 117).

Table 8.4 presents national data for all states combined on percent of children in foster care and rates of child maltreatment. Overall, the rates of maltreatment for NHWs and Latinos are slightly over 10 percent compared to almost double that rate for Black children. White and Black children are almost twice as likely to be placed in foster care as Latino children (USDHHS 2009). However, for Latinos in states where Latinos constitute a larger proportion of the total population, rates are estimated at over 40 percent (CDF 2005). When parents are deemed unfit to care for their children due to lack of financial resources, abuse, or neglect, the children are removed from the home. Once a child has been removed from their home, they are either placed with another family member (i.e., kinship care) or in the care of the state in a temporary foster home until the family can be reunited or the child can be placed in long-term alternative housing (such as a group home). Black children are the most likely to be removed from their home and placed in foster care, and Asian children are least likely. Racial/ethnic minority children are generally overrepresented in the foster care system and between 30 and 40 percent of the children in foster care also receive special education services.

Racial and ethnic disparities are prevalent in the lack of substantiation for specific cases, placement patterns, and service utilization among children in foster care. Although cases reported for abuse and neglect are relatively proportionate for Hispanics and Whites, substantiated cases are more likely to occur with Hispanic children (Suleiman 2003; Church et al. 2005). Children in foster care face several barriers to receiving the education, health care, and required special education services needed to help them transition into successful, productive adults. Black and Latino children are also less likely to be reunited with their parents than White children and are less likely to be adopted, resulting from economic inequalities and racial bias within the foster care system (CDF 2005).

An exploratory study of family reunification of foster care children in California found that family structure (single- vs. two-parent families) played an important role in family reunification. Black single-headed households are at a

Table 8.4. Foster Care and Child Maltreatment Rates by Race and Ethnicity, 2006

	White	Latino	Black	Asian
U.S. child population	55.3	22.8	14.7	4.4
Rates of child maltreatment, 2006	10.7	10.8*	19.8	2.5
Children in foster care, 2006	40.0	19.0	32.0	1.0

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2009.

*In states where Latinos make up a greater population, such as California, New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona, their rates are over 40 percent.

significant disadvantage regarding the likelihood of family reunification compared with White and Latino families. In two-parent families, being Hispanic conferred a significant advantage in timeliness of family reunification compared to being Black or White (Harris and Courtney 2003). Since many of the Black and Latino children in the child welfare system live in single-parent family households, these findings suggest that race/ethnicity and family structure intersect to shape family reunification services and processes. An adverse outcome for many youth who have been placed in foster care is that if they reach the age of eighteen without having been reunified with their families or adopted, they are less likely to be prepared for self-sufficiency due to high rates of early high school leaving and a lack of work experience.

Not surprisingly, children that experience child abuse and neglect are more likely to become involved with the juvenile justice system. The Children's Defense Fund maintains that abused and neglected children are 1.5 to 6 times more likely to be involved in delinquent behavior and 1.25 to 3 times more likely to be arrested as an adult (CDF 2005, 117). A study of school-aged children reported for child abuse in ten California counties after 1990 revealed three interesting findings: (1) Black and Latino children who received in-home or foster care services after the index investigation had a lower risk of incarceration than those whose cases were closed after the investigations; (2) among females, the rate of incarceration was highest for those who experienced foster or group care placements; and (3) children initially reported for neglect were more likely to be incarcerated than those reported for physical or sexual abuse (Jonson-Reid and Barth 2000). These data suggest the need for more specific attention to children whose cases are closed prematurely or who are reported for specific issues within the home (e.g., neglect) to ensure that appropriate interventions are made to reunite the family and prevent future interactions with public systems such as law enforcement.

Questions prompted by the data above include the following: How do we invest in families to strengthen and optimize their parenting role? What types of services do they need to enhance family functioning? What services do the children/youth need to stabilize their lives after a family crisis? Child welfare

systems, similar to other public service systems, are not designed to make the necessary human capital investments required to remedy disadvantage over the life course. What we know is that many low-income children who enter the child welfare system had difficult lives, and the services rendered are more often than not insufficient to make their transition to adulthood easier. Yet, NHB and Latino children are less likely than NHW children to receive the social and psychological interventions needed to address family problems in order to enhance family functioning and progress toward family reunification. Wesley Church's (2006) conclusions are representative of scholarly themes in the literature:

[T]hese findings strongly reinforce the conclusion that extended out-of-home placement is deleterious to the development and well-being of children and their families.... [D]ifferential treatment of ethnically diverse children, as manifested in the precipitous removal of these children from their homes, could "largely be the result of unwarranted, inaccurate, and racist assumptions of parent inadequacy and family instability (1021, quoting Close 1983, 14).

Thus child welfare services and their in/effectiveness cannot be understood without taking into account the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, and structural inequality that results in an unfair disadvantage for these children's developmental pipeline and that places them at high risk for disciplinary measures in schools and interface with law enforcement officials.

Schools as Pipelines for Prison

Quality education is a major determinant of economic, social, physical, and mental well-being and is a strong predictor of a child's range of future options and quality of life. Why has the expression "schools as pipelines for prison" been coined? This link between schools and prisons is related to several findings regarding institutional policies and characteristics of schools where Latino and NHBs are in the majority: (1) low-performing schools; (2) a high rate of students receiving free or reduced lunch (an indicator for low SES); (3) strong disciplinary policies that are enforced; (4) constant threats to civil liberties (such as personal searches and security guards from the local police jurisdiction); and (5) high rates of school suspensions and expulsions (Dinkes et al. 2007; ACLU 2007; Snyder and Sickmund 2006). Marion Wright Edelman, a youth advocate, depicts the lived experiences of poor racial/ethnic minority youth in schools:

High school dropouts are almost three times as likely to be incarcerated as youths who have graduated from high school. But dropouts are not the only ones who encounter entryways into the prison pipeline. Many middle and high schools have full-time police officers who can independently arrest children on school

grounds for any number of infractions like disorderly conduct, malicious mischief and fighting that just a few years ago would have been handled by families, the schools or community institutions. And now, children as young as five and six are being hauled down to police stations in handcuffs. I think we adults have lost our common sense and sense of plain decency. (Edelman 2009)⁵

Differences in discipline policies at the school level, such as the zero tolerance policy,⁶ arrests for minor, noncriminal violations of school rules, and gang prevention programs have a disproportionately negative effect on NHB and Latino youth, resulting in these students being penalized more regularly and more harshly for committing acts that tend to be normal or average for their grade and age level (ACLU 2007). For example, Francisco Villarruel and Nancy Walker (2002) found that NHB and Latino students (12 percent each) were not significantly more likely than NHW students (7 percent) to have ever belonged to a gang. However, NHB (41 percent) and Latino (48 percent) students were significantly more likely than NHW students (23 percent) to attend a school where gangs were present (Snyder and Sickmund 2006). Furthermore, Latino students (10 percent) were more likely to report being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, compared to 7 percent of NHW and 8 percent of NHB students. Latino youth (18 percent) were also more likely to report that they have been in a physical fight at school compared to 12 percent of NHW students (Dinkes et al. 2007).

Thus schools that NHB and Latino youth attend are more likely to have violence and other crimes because they are located in highly segregated poor

communities. Latino and NHB students are more vigilant in school settings and more likely to be harshly punished at school. The most frequent discipline issues that were rated as serious or moderate problems by school principals were tardiness, absenteeism, and physical conflicts that often led to expulsion or suspension (Office for Civil Rights 2002). Although Latinos represent 18 percent of elementary and secondary school enrollment, they account for 16 percent of out-of-school suspensions and 20 percent of school expulsions. In 2003, 28 percent of NHWs under the age of seventeen reported that they at some time were suspended from school, compared to 56 percent of NHBs and 38 percent of Latinos (Snyder and Sickmund 2006).

Higher rates of suspension, expulsion, and applications of the zero tolerance policy have negative consequences that contribute to poorer school climate, higher dropout rates, lower student achievement, and more punitive consequences for NHB and Latino youth compared to NHW students (Heitzeg 2009). These schools are also more likely to have inexperienced teachers and refer NHB and Latino students to CPS and to the police. Stereotypic perceptions associated with the social construction of the "danger posed by these youth" to the school community contribute to the marginalization and criminalization of these students that eventually narrow their life options and chances to improve their lives.

Race/Ethnicity, Neighborhood, Public Safety, and Law Enforcement

Public safety has always been a concern of the U.S. government, and public funds are used for the protection of individuals, families, and neighborhoods, through police presence and the criminal justice system, which prosecutes and tries people who are thought to be a danger to public safety. Public safety is not only a concern of law enforcement but also of low-income racial/ethnic residents who care about personal safety and crime in their neighborhoods. In the 2005 American Housing Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 15 percent of those polled reported crime in their neighborhoods, and 24 percent of those polled stated that the crime was bothersome enough for them to want to move. Latinos (36 percent) were the most likely to state that neighborhood crime was troublesome enough for them to want to move. However, Latinos (19 percent), NHBs (25 percent), and those living below the poverty level (20 percent) reported a higher incidence of neighborhood crime than the total group (U.S. Census 2006). Thus, regardless of the level of police presence or crime prevention programs, Latinos, NHBs, and those living below the poverty line do not feel safer as a result of law enforcement efforts. Rather, NHB and Latino males all too often find themselves as targets of biased law enforcement practices.

5. See www.childrensdefense.org. Children's Defense Fund (CDF) president Marian Wright Edelman writes a weekly Child Watch column.

6. Since the 1980s the phrase *zero tolerance* has signified a philosophy toward illegal conduct that favors strict imposition of penalties regardless of the individual circumstances of each case. Zero tolerance policies deal primarily with drugs and weapons and have been implemented by most school districts in the United States. Two federal laws have driven zero tolerance, but state legislatures have also been willing to mandate similar policies. Supporters of zero tolerance policies contend that they promote the safety and well-being of school children and send a powerful message of deterrence. In addition, supporters believe strict adherence to these policies ensures that school officials do not treat individual children differently. Critics of zero tolerance believe that inflexible discipline policies produce harmful results. Moreover, school administrators have failed to use common sense in applying zero tolerance, leading to the expulsion of children for bringing to school such items as an aspirin or a plastic knife. School principals, who must administer zero tolerance policies, began to suspend and expel students for seemingly trivial offenses. Students have been suspended or expelled for a host of relatively minor incidents, including possession of nail files, paper clips, organic cough drops, a model rocket, a five-inch plastic ax as part of a Halloween costume, an inhaler for asthma, and a kitchen knife in a lunch box to cut chicken. Outraged parents of children disciplined by zero tolerance policies protested to school boards, publicized their cases with the news media, and sometimes filed lawsuits in court seeking the overturning of the discipline. Courts generally have rejected such lawsuits, concluding that school administrators must have the ability to exercise their judgment in maintaining school safety (Heitzeg 2009). For these definitions see <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Zero+Tolerance>.

Policing practices in poor, racial/ethnic communities became more aggressive during the 1980s War on Drugs when Latino and NHB males in the public imagination were perceived to be the most likely to carry and use drugs. These practices, referred to as *racial profiling*, are commonly practiced on U.S. highways as well as in communities where NHBs and Latinos are unfairly and disproportionately targeted and accused by police of committing crimes (Oboler 2009, 6; Rights Working Group 2010). The ACLU has been involved in lawsuits against several states including Arizona, California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island for violating individuals' rights by racial profiling. In Texas, a state that is heavily populated by Latinos, a survey of the law enforcement records by the *New York Times* found that NHBs and Latinos were significantly more likely to be stopped by the police than NHWs, and were also 3.5 times more likely to be searched (Barnes 2004). The ACLU (2007) contends that racial profiling is largely ineffective, causes resentment in the targeted communities, and is becoming a common practice. The ACLU advocates that racial profiling be eradicated or at least minimized with the use of data collection tools that allows stakeholders to monitor who is being stopped, how often certain groups are stopped, how those who are stopped are being treated, and the results of the police stopping (2007).

In a 2009 National Survey of Latinos by the Pew Hispanic Center (2009d), among a sample of 2,012 Hispanics sixteen years of age and older, questions were asked regarding risky behavior such as carrying a weapon, being threatened with a weapon, being in a fight, and being questioned by police. Not unexpectedly, U.S.-born Latino males were almost three times as likely as girls to report risky behaviors, and 29 percent of males reported being routinely questioned by police. Surprisingly, although few Latina girls reported engaging in risky behavior, about 13 percent of the females were also routinely questioned by police. Although data are not available for racial/ethnic comparison, these data may suggest that Latino females have come under surveillance in recent years although they engage in risky behaviors at a lower rate than seems warranted by police questioning. In contrast, immigrant Latinos were less likely to engage in risky behaviors and less likely to be questioned by police (15 percent) compared to second-generation (26 percent) and third-generation and higher (26 percent). High school graduates or those in school were less likely to engage in risky behaviors and less likely to be questioned by police (25 percent) than those Latinos who were not high school graduates and who were not in school (32 percent). Of interest, only 3 percent of young Hispanics say they are in a gang, but 31 percent say they have friends or family members with gang involvement. Among Latinos, Mexican-origin groups are significantly more likely to have a family or friend who is or was involved in a gang (37 percent) than other Latino groups (19 percent) (82–86). These data challenge

national law enforcement data and perceptions of significant members of Latino youth as gang members, yet police surveillance for both males and females is prevalent in these poor communities (PEW Hispanic Center 2009d).

Another form of racial profiling is the hypersensationalism and social constructions fueled by the media of gangs as unique and specific to Latino and NHB adolescents and as threats to neighborhood safety.⁷ Interestingly, although “crime had significantly dropped between 1993 and 2000, it continued to dominate both the news and entertainment media. Hence, the power of media lies not only in its ability to project fear but also its capacity to convey a highly racialized picture of crime to the public” (Morín 2009, 24).

The media fuels fear that is then translated into public policy. For example, in 1996 the U.S. legislature passed the “Violent Youth Predator Law” offering millions of dollars to states to implement harsh juvenile justice policies. This law lowered the age from sixteen to fourteen to be tried as an adult for a crime and legislated mandatory sentences for violent youth offenses (Rios 2009b, 101). How these images are projected and inform public policy speaks to racialized institutional practices for maintaining social control over NHB and Latino males, who have historically been perceived as dangerous to the social order. The intersecting roles of media, public policy, and allocation of federal resources show how hegemonic ideology shapes the power relationships between poor, racialized minorities and society. In other words, as the fear of the racial/ethnic minority poor, including immigrants, became part of the American public imagination, restrictive and punitive legislation was passed both in public assistance (e.g., 1996 PROWRA) and law enforcement systems.

Simultaneously in 1996, the National Youth Gang Survey implemented a survey of “law enforcement agencies to identify the presence and assess the extent of the youth gang problem in jurisdictions throughout the United States” (v). For the purposes of the National Gang Youth Survey study a *gang* was defined as follows:

A group of youths or young adults in your jurisdiction that you or other responsible persons in your agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a “gang.” DO NOT include motorcycle gangs, hate or ideology groups, prison gangs, or other exclusively adult gangs. Thus, the National Youth Gang Survey measures youth gang activity as an identified problem by interested community agents. This approach is both less restrictive and self-determining, allowing for the variation in gang definitions across communities. (U.S. Department of Justice [USDJ] 2006, 4)

7. For a historical and contemporary overview of these stereotypes and their influence on incarceration rates of Latinos, see Bender 2003. For the most recent data on Latinos in the juvenile and adult correctional system, see Pew Hispanic Center 2009c, e.

The most striking aspect in the above quote is the operational definition of a "youth gang" used for the purposes of the survey.⁸ Unsettling is the vague and often contradictory data. The trend data show that Latino youth in 1996 constituted about 45 percent of all gang members, and in 2006, Latinos were reported to represent 49.5 percent of all reported youth gang members. Approximately 731,000 gang members in over 21,500 gangs were estimated to be active in the United States in 2002. This latter figure reflects that a gang is defined as three or more individuals with a name, some form of identity, style of clothing, graffiti, and hand signs. Conflicting data are presented in the report. For example, 29 percent of the agencies reported that on average the majority of identified gang members were neither Latino nor NHB. Several patterns are reported from 2002–2008: prevalence rates of youth gang problems remained high in the largest cities; reports of gang presence increased steadily in suburban counties and smaller cities, and then decreased between 2007–2008; and little change is observed in gang-problem prevalence rates for rural areas where less than 5 percent of the total number of gang members are located (USDJ 2010). In large cities, half or more of the reported young gang members remained in the gang for less than one year, and older youth (18+ years) are remaining for longer periods. The report states that in the absence of viable social and economic opportunities (e.g., employment) the upper age limit of gang membership is extended (USDJ 2006, 20). Focused concentration in poor, racial/ethnic inner-city communities characterizes this report. Yet the ambiguous definition of gang membership seems to mark as dangerous a whole racial/ethnic community on state enforcement definitions of three or more individuals constituting a gang. These definitions are then implemented based on the perception and social constructions of law enforcement officials and geographic region (Durán 2009).

In a large survey of middle school students across eleven large cities among reported gang members, 25 percent were Latino, 31 percent were NHB, and 25 percent were NHW. Among these gang members, 10–20 percent are reported to be females, which inflates the reported 3 percent of female gang

8. Conflicting definitions of the term *gang* exist. The U.S. Department of Justice defines the term *gang* as "an ongoing group, club, organization, or association of five or more persons: (A) that has as one of its primary purposes the commission of one or more of the criminal offenses described in subsection (c); (B) the members of which engage, or have engaged within the past five years, in a continuing series of offenses described in subsection (c); and (C) the activities of which affect interstate or foreign commerce" (18 USC § 521[a]).

Current federal law describes the term *gang crime* as: "(1) A federal felony involving a controlled substance (as defined in Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 USC § 802)) for which the maximum penalty is not less than five years. (2) A federal felony crime of violence that has as an element the use or attempted use of physical force against the person of another. (3) A conspiracy to commit an offense described in paragraph (1) or (2)" (18 USC § 521[c]). For more information see <http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis>.

members in 2001 (Bender 2003, 38). Further the PEW study reports that a minuscule number of Latino girls are gang members (Fry 2009). The conclusion is that considerable variation was observed across the sites and that "site selection shapes the image of gangs and gang members; they are a reflection of their communities" (Esbensen and Lynskey 2001).

Interrogating these figures is important. Robert Durán (2009) observes:

The majority of gang members across the United States have been racially and ethnically identified by police officers as Latino (47 percent) or African American (31 percent) and they have been mostly poor (85 percent). Self-reported data indicate that Whites identify as gang members at a higher rate than is captured by police data. Many states legally define gangs as three or more people engaged in criminal activity individually or collectively. This neutral definition has resulted in an application of the label to people who are considered non-white (144).

The social construction of gang membership is closely linked with poverty. As I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the moral construction of poverty is associated with the negative identity marker of criminality, delinquency, and dangerousness or the "racial/ethnic minority threat." This representation of Mexican Americans predominantly in Los Angeles, Chicago, and other large urban areas represents a historical marker of lawlessness. As Steven Bender (2003) recounts the legal legacy of Latinos, he states: "The current legal standards applicable to racial profiling by government do not sufficiently discourage these law enforcement practices—enough leeway resides in present law to disguise profiling or, in some circumstances, to rely explicitly on racial and ethnic profiles to justify interrogatory steps" (53). Bender provides the example of the 1855 California Vagrancy Act, popularly known as the Greaser Act, and notes "the racist potential of this early anti-loitering law survives today in loitering, anti-gang, anti-day laborer, and curfew statutes and ordinances that are racially neutral on their face yet give law enforcement officials great discretion in their application" (55). Contemporary studies document the persistent practices of marking Latino youth as dangerous to the social order.

Durán (2009) illustrates the application of police discretion in poor communities. In an ethnographic study over a five-year period of Mexican American communities in Ogden, Utah, and Denver, Colorado, he explored the gang suppression model and how it becomes practiced in the profiling and interactions between police and inner-city Mexican Americans. His findings showed that the actual practice of gang enforcement included: (1) racialized profiles, (2) fabricated intelligence, and (3) suppression of marginalized communities (163). The author concludes that young, poor Mexican American boys and men are perceived as a threat for gang membership and that "structurally vulnerable areas become targeted with concentrated aggressive gang enforcement

that supported gang assumptions and fueled moral panic by labeling non-gang members as gang members (ecological containment)" (164).

In addition, observations revealed that Whites were treated more leniently by police and that vigorous "lock-up" (prison) approaches remained the key action of police departments, particularly in large cities with a gang problem (Durán 2009). Labeling and time spent in juvenile justice facilities and/or prisons have serious life course consequences for a group of young boys and men who already have economic and educational disadvantage stacked against them. The "lock-up" approach channels many Latino youth into the juvenile justice system (153). Two major events have contributed to the increase in the incarceration rates of Latinos compared to Whites: (1) the intentional and punitive laws in the 1990s; and (2) gang definitions and policy, surveillance, and racial profiling in poor, Latino communities. Victor Rios (2009b) describes that "the development of punitive juvenile justice policy in the 1990's was influenced by racialized constructions of Black and Latino youth as "super predators" by intellectuals, politicians and the media" (101).

Juvenile Justice: Latino Overrepresentation

Hispanics are most often classified by the juvenile justice system as Whites, with 92 percent of Hispanic juveniles being classified as White.⁹ Villarruel and Walker (2002) found that inaccuracies in the reporting of Latinos as Whites contribute to Latinos being undercounted. Lack of racial and ethnic identifiers in federal and state corrections data systems continue to make Latinos an invisible group in the prison population (Community Service Society 2008). Census data indicate that about 3 percent of young U.S.-born Hispanic males and 2 percent of foreign-born Hispanic males were incarcerated in 2008 compared to 1 percent of young White males and 7 percent of Black males. About 70 percent of U.S.-born Latinos are placed in local and state correctional facilities, while 70 percent of Latinos in federal facilities are non-U.S.-born Latinos. Since 1970 incarceration rates have increased from 1.5 percent to 3.1 percent for native born and from 1.5 percent to 2.1 percent for foreign-born Latinos (Pew Hispanic Center 2009d, 87-88).

9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not regularly maintain data for prison inmates by race and ethnicity in local and state correctional facilities. However, special reports on local jail inmates from 2002 and state prison inmates in 1991 provide some insight on Latino representation in these facilities. Since the U.S. Marshall Service (USMS) reports arrest data by race only, percentage of Latinos arrested by the USMS for drugs is not available. Villarruel and Walker (2002) found that juveniles at the federal prison level were overcounted in the White race category with 58 percent of the inmates being classified as White, but when ethnicity was controlled for, only 31 percent of the juvenile prison population was White.

Latino youth who enter the juvenile justice system are less likely to be high school graduates, more likely to be poor, more likely to live in urban neighborhoods that are not "neighborhoods of opportunity," and more likely to be under surveillance by law enforcement personnel. As observed the zero tolerance policy and surveillance of the school that the youth attends also increases his/her probability of incarceration. In addition, these youth come from families who lack the resources to provide extracurricular activities and opportunities that keep youth actively engaged in educational and labor market experiences and deter youth from becoming involved with the juvenile justice system (Arboleda 2002; Acevedo-Garcia et al. 2008). Racial profiling and racial stereotypes that infer that all Latinos are gang members and are more likely to commit crimes than other groups increase the arrest and conviction rates of Latino youth (Durán 2009; Rios 2006). The following quote from a nineteen-year-old Latino speaks to this disproportionate rate and racial profiling that contributes to higher incarceration rates for Latino youth:

I heard a lot of friends from around here say "Maybe you should let the White guy drive because the police will pull you over and search your car." I've been searched twice... and they put me in handcuffs... and put me on the sidewalk and didn't find anything and let me go. (Pew Hispanic Center 2009d, 88)

Trends in Incarceration Rates and Unequal Treatment

Once Latinos enter the juvenile justice system, there is also evidence that they do not receive the same treatment as NHWs. From 1985 to 2001, the number of youth in detention centers doubled. Latino youth are three times more likely than NHW youth to be incarcerated (Hinton Hoytt et al. 2002a). In 1985, NHW youth were detained at the rate of 45 per 100,000, while NHB and Hispanic rates were 114 and 73, respectively. By 1995, detention rates for NHWs had decreased by 13 percent, while the rates for NHBs (180 percent increase) and Hispanics (140 percent increase) had skyrocketed (Wordes and Jones 1998). For example, in Texas for the years 2002 to 2003, the number of prisoners under eighteen more than doubled (112 percent increase) (USDJ 2004a). Nationally 190 out of every 100,000 NHW juveniles were in custody in a juvenile facility compared to 348 out of every 100,000 Latino youth and 754 out of every 100,000 NHB juveniles (Snyder and Sickmund 2006). In a thirty-six state study on disposition of cases, three findings are important. Latino admission rates to custody after being found guilty were thirteen times higher than for NHW youth for drug offenses, five times higher than the admission rate for Whites for violent offenses, and twice the rate of White admission for property offenses. Second, Latino youth (average 305 days) were

more likely to serve longer sentences than NHB youth (average 254 days) and NHW youth (average 193 days). Third, Latino youth were treated more harshly for the same crime (Villarruel and Walker 2002).

The increased racial profiling of girls in low-income communities coupled with a lack of economic resources to retain private counsel results in many girls being sentenced to adult prison without going through the juvenile system first (Gaarder and Belknap 2002). Although the data on Latinas suggest that girls are experiencing similar aggressive racial profiling and law enforcement "lock-up" approaches, although the percent is very small, social science researchers unfortunately have begun to focus on girls as deviant gang members.¹⁰ In fact, many of these boys and girls are not gang members but are perceived as a threat to the social order (Rios 2009b). Laurie Schaffner (2009) in her study of Latina adolescents in juvenile detention, many of whom were first- or second generation, describes the girls' background:

Similar to other reports reflecting the troubled lives of detained young women, the youth who participated in this research came from depleted and disadvantaged backgrounds: 58 percent had already dropped out of school; 46 percent reported having experienced some form of physical abuse; 40 percent reported sexual harm due to interpersonal violence; and 83 percent claimed to self-medicate or were substance-dependent. (117)

For both males and females, high poverty rates, lack of adequate education and recreational activities, perceived and actual gang involvement by law enforcement, depression, and discriminatory judicial practices are all factors that contribute to the overrepresentation of Latino youth in the juvenile justice system and in local and state corrections systems (Arboleda 2002; Driscoll 1999; Davalos et al. 2005).

This unprecedented increase in Latino youth and immigrant imprisonment, also part of what is referred to as the "prison-industrial complex," (D. Hernández 2009, 43), has been of concern to social scientists, community activists, and families of these youth (Cartagena 2009; Oboler 2009). For example, questions of how masculinity is informed in prison systems are important. Victor Rios (2009a) examines how policing, incarceration, and probation offer "masculinity making resources" that confer on a prison inmate or ex-inmate permanent criminal credentials that virtually close off options for participation

10. Research on Latino women in prison is important. In the edited volume by Oboler (2009), two articles—one by Juanita Díaz-Cotto, *Chicana(o) Prisoners: Ethical and Methodological Considerations, Collaborative Research Methods, and Case Studies*, and the other by B. V. Olguín, *Toward a Pinta(o) Human Rights? New and Old Strategies for Chicana(o) Research Activism*—propose approaches for the study of race, ethnicity, and gender in penal studies.

in the labor market and the "development of a specific set of gendered practices (response to police treatment and institutional racism with a tough front of physical aggression and hypermasculinity), heavily influenced by interactions with police, detention facilities, and probation officers" (151). The author concludes that "gender is one of the processes by which the criminal justice system is involved in the reproduction of inequality" (160–161). These gender processes are inserted into the lives of youth who have already experienced by virtue of their circumstances, poverty and at every stage of their interaction with public systems, unfair treatment and inadequate quality of services. As discussed in previous chapters, these life experiences contribute to a sense of hopelessness and depression associated with suicide attempts and undetected emotional and behavioral conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) that are exacerbated by incarceration (Canino and Roberts 2001). Unfortunately juvenile arrests most likely contribute to future imprisonment. The Department of Justice estimates that the lifetime chances of a person going to prison are higher for NHBs (19 percent) and Latinos (10 percent) than for NHWs (3 percent), with an estimated 17 percent of all Latino males likely to enter state or federal prison during their lifetime compared to 6 percent of NHW males and 32 percent of NHB males (USDJ 2000).

Local and State Correctional Facilities

For young adult Latinos the probability of serving time in a detention center or local prison is highly associated with (1) parental economic resources and levels of knowledge regarding legal rights, (2) inadequate legal representation because most public defenders are overburdened with cases and are unable to prepare a strong defense or an appeal, and (3) the judicial representatives' perception of Latino youth as gang members and a threat to society, so that judges are less likely to approve their release. Those who serve time in state and local correctional facilities tend to be less educated than those convicted and incarcerated by the federal prison system. In 2002, the Department of Justice reported that while 27 percent of federal inmates had obtained some high school or less, this was the highest level of education attained by 40 percent of state inmates and 47 percent of local jail inmates. Latinos (53 percent) were the largest group of state prison inmates who had not earned a high school diploma or a GED compared to 27 percent of NHWs and 44 percent of NHBs. Those inmates whose families had received welfare or lived in public housing represented about 41 percent of the state inmates and were most likely to not have completed high school (47 percent) than those whose families did not receive these public services (35 percent) (USDJ 2003a, b). In 2002, 30 percent of local jail inmates reported they were not employed before their arrest, and

of those that were employed approximately 40 percent reported their income was less than \$1,000 a month (USDJ 2004b).

In 2003, nearly 60 percent of persons in local jails were racial/ethnic minorities: 15 percent were Hispanic and 40 percent were Black. In state jails in 1991, racial/ethnic minorities were more sharply overrepresented, with 65 percent being non-White inmates (USDJ 1997; USDJ 2004b). States with highest Latino populations are also the states with the highest prison populations: Texas, California, Florida, and New York (USDJ 2004a). Among prisoners who are not U.S. citizens, 62 percent are held in state prisons and 38 percent are held in federal facilities. On a state level, noncitizens composed 12 percent of prisoners in California, 6 percent of those in Texas, 12 percent of those in New York, and 6 percent of those in Florida (USDJ 2004a).

Table 8.5 displays national data on percent of inmates by race and ethnicity and offense in local and state prisons for the year 2002. Whites are slightly more likely to have prior offenses and to be charged with violent, property, and public disorder offenses. Blacks are more likely to be charged with violent offenses and drug charges at both local and state levels. Latinos are most likely to be in state and local prisons for drug charges but least likely to have prior offenses.

The encounters with the criminal justice system that lead up to incarceration, such as arrest and pretrial detainment, have important impacts on incarceration rates. Hispanics experience multiple disadvantages associated with incarceration. Hispanic defendants are 25 percent *less likely* than non-Hispanic defendants to be released before trial (22.7 percent compared to 63.1 percent), substantially *more likely* to be detained before trial than non-Hispanics (90.6 percent compared to 53.5 percent), and *least likely* of all groups to have a criminal history (56.6 percent compared to 75 percent and 60.6 percent for Blacks and Whites, respectively) (Arboleda 2002). Even though Hispanics are *slightly less likely* to be drug users than non-Hispanics (10.1 percent of Hispanics as compared to 10.9 percent of NHBs and 11.2 percent of NHWs), they are *highly likely* to be convicted for drug offenses and the *least likely* to be convicted for violent offenses (42.6 percent of drug-offenders were Latinos and only 9.5 percent of offenders convicted for violent offenses were Hispanic). For those convicted of violent offenses, Latinos served sentences that were fourteen months longer among those with the same offense. Latinos and NHBs (27 percent) were more likely than NHWs (22 percent) to be serving time for violent offenses and drug offenses (31 percent of NHBs and 28 percent of Latinos compared to 19 percent of NHWs) (USDJ 2004a). These data do not suggest that Latinos and NHBs commit these crimes more often than NHWs but show that they are more likely to be racially profiled, arrested, incarcerated, and serve time for committing these crimes than their NHW counterparts.

Table 8.5. Profile of Jail Inmates by Offense and Race and Ethnicity, 2002

	Violent		Property		Drug		Public order		Percent with prior offenses
	Local prison	State prison	Local	State	Local prison	State prison	Local	State	Local
Non-Hispanic White	22%	49%	28	30	19	12	31	8	61
Non-Hispanic Black	27	47	24	22	31	25	18	5	58
Latino	27	39	18	21	28	33	28	8	51

Source: U.S. Department of Justice 2004b.

Federal Prison

U.S. federal law enforcement agencies including Customs and Border Protection, Drug Enforcement Agency, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Marshall Services, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Customs and Immigration Enforcement arrested suspects for violations of federal laws (violent offenses, property damage, theft, immigration, drug, weapons, and other illegal acts) (USDJ 2003a). Those in federal prison tend to be more educated than those in state and local prisons, with approximately 50 percent of them having a high school diploma (27 percent) or a postsecondary degree (24 percent) (USDJ 2003b). These data generally represent NHW with drug offenses, professional corporate, and "white collar" inmates, while most Latinos in federal prison are incarcerated for immigration violations. In 2003, noncitizens of the United States comprised 23 percent of all inmates held in federal prisons.

Table 8.6 displays federal prison inmate population by offense and race and ethnicity. In 2003, similar to 2006, Latinos represented 32 percent of the federal prison population, compared to 39 percent of NHBs and 58 percent of NHWs (USDJ 2003a, 2007). Latinos were the largest group serving time for immigration offenses (90 percent), the least serious offense. Latinos were the *least likely* compared to NHBs and NHWs to be serving time for violent offenses (USDJ 2003a). Latinos are *more likely* to be federal prison inmates than inmates in state facilities due to the high rate of immigration and drug cases that are handled by the Federal agencies (USDJ 2000; Pew Hispanic Center 2009). For Latinos, increased arrests are most likely associated with renewed anti-immigrant policies in the twenty-first century.

In 2003, Latinos constituted 33 percent of federal inmates serving time for drug charges, compared to 54 percent of NHWs and 46 percent of NHBs.

Table 8.6. Profile of Federal Prison Inmates by Offense and Race and Ethnicity, September 2003

Race	All offenses	Violent	Fraudulent	Drug	Weapon	Immigration
White	58	45	63	54	43	95
Black	39	43	34	45	55	4
Latino	32	7	13	33	10	90
Asian	1	1	3	1	1	0.4

Source: U.S. Department of Justice 2003a, table 7.10.

During October 2002 to September 2003, most arrests for drug charges were made by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the U.S. Marshall Service (USMS). The majority of arrestees for drugs were NHW (70 percent) and Latinos (43 percent), with NHBs (28 percent) being least likely to be arrested by the DEA. Noteworthy, 40 percent of drug arrests made by the DEA were in Texas (12 percent), California (11 percent), Florida (11 percent), and New York (7 percent)—all states that are heavily populated by Latinos. Among the federal prison population, about 97 percent of NHWs were arrested for drugs and about 4 percent of NHBs for immigration violations (USDJ 2003a). Approximately 90 percent of those serving a sentence for federal immigration offenses are Latino. Yet 95 percent of those Latinos are racially classified as White, which underestimates the way that immigration policy and the criminal justice system are adversely affecting the Latino community (USDJ 2003a).

In summary, the overrepresentation of NHBs and Latinos at all levels of the prison system have contributed to considerable concern, and increasing scholarship has emerged on the prison-industrial complex that seeks to unveil the forces of structural inequality for low-income, historically underrepresented groups and the institutional practices used to exclude marginalized and immigrant groups (see Oboler 2009). *Petit apartheid*¹¹ has been used to explain racial profiling in the war against drugs, regulating and policing public spaces, underrepresentation of persons of color in law enforcement, and the use of racial derogation in prosecutors' closing arguments (Romero 2006; Martinez 2007). The investment in a prison-industrial complex is a macro-aggression toward Latino and NHB communities. The critical question is why has society not invested in community and neighborhood development and human capital to improve the material conditions and expand the economic and social opportunity structure to Latino and NHB communities? The overwhelming

11. *Petit apartheid* refers to the hidden, informal types of racial bias that permeate various stages of the criminal justice system. Notably, these informal practices are not included in most evaluations of racial discrimination. For more information see *Petit Apartheid in the U.S. Criminal Justice System: The Dark Figure of Racism* by Dragan Milovanovic and Katheryn K. Russell-Brown (2001, Durham: Carolina Academic Press), which offers the first detailed consideration of *petit apartheid* through a series of essays by criminal justice experts.

majority of youth and adults (male and female) who enter the juvenile and correctional systems were born into distressed communities.

Historical moral constructions of poverty and their intersection with race and Hispanic ethnicity have driven the development, implementation, and quality of U.S. public service systems. These stratification systems are characterized by disinvestments in poor and racial/ethnic communities, and in the last two decades by more restrictive and discriminatory policies including PROWRA, the Violent Youth Predator Act, and federal and state immigration policies. Public service systems reinforce those very moral hegemonic constructions of poverty that both create the material and social conditions of poverty and develop punitive public systems to maintain the poor and marginalized outside the social, economic, and civic opportunity structure. These institutional practices are then justified by mainstream narratives about individual, cultural, or racial/ethnic irresponsibility.

Several observations emerge from these data. First, being poor and a racial/ethnic minority is a negative identity marker that places a person at risk of interacting with public service systems at multiple stages of their life course. These systems predominantly serve the same populations, and thus individuals often have crossovers into different parts of the public systems throughout their life course. Second, the public service system does not often serve as a safety or support net for poor people to promote economic self-sufficiency and social mobility. The intergenerational cycle of poverty is more often a reflection of structural failure than individual or family failure. Structural processes of inequality include the provision of unfair and inequitable access to quality services, such as schools and housing, and the use of disciplinary power by bureaucratic guardians who often embrace a hegemonic view of the poor as deviant and representing a "culture of irresponsibility," requiring social containment and control.

Third, neighborhoods are the locus of control where issues of social inequality and citizenship rights are inextricably linked to disciplinary power that maintains low-income families in marginalized social locations. Neighborhoods are where federal and state policies such as school enforcement, law enforcement, and immigration policies are most likely to target community members. For example, the trajectory from racial profiling, to policing strategies in low-income neighborhoods, to incarceration and probation has serious consequences for Latino youth and adults in every domain of their life. For low-income Latino youth and their families, inadequate neighborhood resources, low-quality public systems, and a mutually constituted negative Latino identity marker projected by media sensationalism that makes visible predominantly only foreignness, gang membership, and pregnancy forecloses access to the economic opportunity structure and reinforces inequality on a daily basis.